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THE Poor Doubting CHRISTIAN Drawn unto CHRIST.

Wherein the main Lets and Hinderances, which keep men from coming to Christ, are discovered.

With special Helps to recover Gods favour.

By THO. HOOKER.

Isa. 55. 1. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, drink of the waters of life; and he that hath no money, come, buy, eat freely.*

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159

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Tho. Weeks.

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THE Poor Doubting CHRISTIAN Drawn unto CHRIST.

John 6. 45.

Every man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me.

THere are divers lets and impediments which hinder poor Christians from coming unto Christ; all which I desire to reduce to these following Heads.

First, such hinderances as really keep men from coming to take hold

of Christ at all, which are briefly these.

Lets which hinder men from coming to Christ.

1. Blind carelesnes or presumptuous Security, whereby men content themselves with their present condition, presuming all is well with them, when there is no such matter.

2. Being convinced of this, they bethink how to save themselves by their own strength, and thereupon set upon a reformation of life, thinking to make God amends by reforming some sins which they hear themselves reproved of by the Ministers.

3. The sinner being convinced of his utter inability to please God in himself, at length gets up a stair higher, and sees all his performances, and prayers, and duties to be of no power in themselves, but that he must leave all, and cleave onely unto Christ by faith; and this he thinks he can do well enough, and so trusts himself upon Christ, thinking all the work is then done, and no more to be looked after.

4.

4. If he sees this fails him too, then he goes yet further, and confesseth he cannot come to Christ, except Christ give him his hand, and help him up; therefore now he will attend upon the Ordinances, and labour and bestir himself hard in the use of all good means, conceiving thereby to hammer out at last a *faith* of his own to make him happy. And here he rests, hanging as it were upon the outside of the Ark so long till at last the waves and winds growing fierce and violent, he is beaten off, and so sinks for ever.

Besides these, there are other kinds of hinderances which do not indeed deprive a man of title and interest to eternal happiness, but make the way tedious and uncomfortable, so that he cannot come to Christ so readily as he desires and longs to do; the ground whereof is this: When men, out of carnal reason, contrive another way to come unto Christ the ever he ordained or revealed; when we *set up our standards by Gods standard*, or *our thresholds by his*,

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Lets which hinder men from coming to Christ.

1. Blind careleſsneſs or preſumptuous Security, whereby men content themſelves with their preſent condition, preſuming all is well with them, when there is no ſuch matter.

2. Being convinced of this, they bethink how to ſave themſelves by their own ſtrength, and thereupon ſet upon a reformation of life, thinking to make God amends by reforming ſome ſins which they hear themſelves reproved of by the Miniſters.

3: The ſinner being convinced of his utter inability to pleaſe God in himſelf, at length gets up a ſtair higher, and ſees all his performances, and prayers, and duties to be of no power in themſelves, but that he muſt leave all, and cleave onely unto Chriſt by faith; and this he thinks he can do well enough, and ſo truſts himſelf upon Chriſt, thinking all the work is then done, and no more to be looked after.

4.

4. If he ſees this fails him too, then he goes yet further, and confeſſeth he cannot come to Chriſt, except Chriſt give him his hand, and help him up; therefore now he will attend upon the Ordinances, and labour and beſtir himſelf hard in the uſe of all good means, conceiving thereby to hammer out at laſt a *faith* of his own to make him happy. And here he reſts, hanging as it were upon the outſide of the Ark ſo long till at laſt the waves and winds growing fierce and violent, he is beaten off, and ſo ſinks for ever.

Beſides theſe, there are other kinds of hinderances which do not indeed deprive a man of title and intereſt to eternal happineſs, but make the way tedious and uncomfortable, ſo that he cannot come to Chriſt ſo readily as he deſires and longs to do; the ground whereof is this: When men, out of carnal reaſon, contrive another way to come unto Chriſt the ever he ordained or revealed; when we *ſet up our ſtandards by Gods ſtandard*, or *our threſholds by his*,

Ezek. 43. 8. and out of our own imagination make another state of believing then ever Christ required or ordained. No marvel that we come short of him: For thus we put rubs and make bars in our way: we manacle our hands, and fetter our feet and then say, that we cannot take nor go: Thus it is with you poor Christians, and the fault is your own.

Three main hinderances which keep men from Christ.

But, amongst many, there be three Hinderances which are chiefly to be observed, by which many gracious hearts are marvellously hindered from coming to, and from receiving that comfort from Christ which they might, and he is willing to impart unto them.

1. First, the distressed soul, being (haply) truly humbled, takes notice of the beauty of holiness, and the Image of God stamp'd upon the hearts of his children, and of all those precious promises which God hath made to all that are his; now the soul seeing these begins thus to reason with it self, and saith; Surely if I were so holy and so gracious, then

then I might have hope to receive the pardon of my sins: or were my heart so enlarged to duties, and could my heart be so carried with power against my corruptions, to master them, then there were some hope: But when I have no power against sin, nor any heart to seek so importunately for a Christ, how dare I think that any mercy belongs to me, having so many wants? Thus they dare not come to the promise; and they will not venture upon it, because they have not the enlargement to duties, and that power against corruption which sometimes the Saints of God have.

But we must know, this doth not hinder; and that we make that a hinderance, which, in truth, is none. For (observe it) we must not think to bring our enlargements and hope to the promise, but go to the promise for them: Hope must be stirred, and Desire quickned, and Love and Joy kindled by the promise. But who made this condition of the *Covenant*, That a man must have so

much of enlargement, before he can come to the promise? Our Saviour being our husband, requires no portion with us, nor ever look'd after any. All that he looks for, is, meer poverty and emptiness. If thou hast nothing, yet he will have thee with thy nothing, provided that thou wilt have him. Therefore it is thus written: *The rich he sends empty away*; but the poor he satisfies, and the thirsty he refreshes with good; and so, as that there is nothing required on our side, but to receive him as a Husband: For, *Buy without money*, is the Text. You must not come and think to buy a Husband: the Lord looks for no power or sufficiency from you, of your selves; nor of your selves any power against corruption, or enlargement to duties: If you will be content that Christ shall take all from you, and dispose of you and all; then, take a Saviour, and then you have him.

But the poor soul saith, *If I go thus hoodwink'd, how shall I know that I do not presume; and how shall I know*

know that I have a true title to the Promise?

I answer: There is no better argument in the world to prove that thou hast an interest in Christ, then this, which is thy taking of the Lord Christ as a Saviour wholly, and as an Husband onely, *John* 1. 12. *As many as received him, to them he gave power to be the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name.* He doth not say, To as many as had such enlargement to duties, and such power against corruption; but if thou wilt take Christ upon those terms which he offers himself, there is no better argument under heaven then that, to prove that thou hast a title to the promise. Indeed, there is a desperate despair that often seizeth upon the hearts of distressed sinners. *Answ.*

Therefore, in the second place, as the sinner looks upon the excellency of Christ, and of grace, and upon his own insufficiency withal, which makes him that he will not venture upon the promise; so he looks too altogether upon his own sinfulness

and worthiness, and therefore dare not venture upon it; he views the number of his sins so many and vile, and the countenance of them so long, and durable; and he seeth the floods of abominations coming in so amain upon his soul, and Satan to boot, (who helps him forward in all this,) therefore he dares not make out unto Christ. But this is the policy of the Devil, who (if he can) will make a man to see sin thorow his own Spectacles, or not to see it at all; and then to say, There is mercy enough in a Saviour, and therefore I may live as I list. But when the sinner will needs see his sin, then he will let him see nothing but sin; and this, to the end that he may despair for ever.

Now here the poor sinner is at a stand, and can go no further; for tell him of the mercy of God, and of the plenteous redemption in Christ, and of the riches of the freeness of Gods grace: What (saith he) should I think that there is any mercy for me, and that I have any interest in Christ? that

that were ſtrange. And thus the ſoul is always poring, and always too much faſtned and ſetled upon his corruption, ever ſtirring the ſore, without ever going to the Phyſitian. Where note, that a man is as well kept from looking to Chriſt by deſpair, as by preſumption. Before he ſees his ſin, he thinks his condition is good, and that he hath a ſufficiency of his own, and needs not go to Chriſt; and when he ſees his ſin, then he beholds ſo much vileneſs in himſelf, and in it, that he dares not go to Chriſt, leſt when he comes before him, he ſend him down to that ever-burning lake of fire and brimſtone. Herein the Devil is very ſubtile; but this doth not hinder our title to Chriſt, neither ought it to diſcourage us from laying hold on ſalvation.

For firſt, (obſerve it,) For whom did Chriſt come into the world, and for whom did he die when he was come? Was it for the *righteous*? ſuch needed him not: It was for the *poor ſinner* that judges himſelf, that con-

condemns himself, and that he cannot save himself. *Paul* saith, *Christ Jesus came into the World to save sinners, of whom I am the chief:* and *Zech.* 13. 1. *There is a fountain opened for sin, and for uncleanness*; that is, for all sorts of sins, and kind of sinners: be their iniquities never so great, and never so vile, there is a Fountain set open for them; come who will. There was never any saved that was not a Rebel first; nor any received to mercy, that first opposed not the mercies of God, and his grace in Christ. The fiery Serpent did sting the people in the wilderness; first then they were stung, and being stung, there was a brazen Serpent to heal them. But,

1 Tim. 1. 15.

Observe the folly of this plea; what Scripture ever said, that the greatness of mans sin could hinder the greatness of Gods mercy? no Scripture saith so; we see *David* prayeth to the contrary, *Have mercy upon me, O Lord, and pardon my sins, for they are great:* Nay, God himself doth the quite contrary, *Isay*

Psal. 25. 11.

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43. 24, 25. *Thou hast made me serve with thy sins, and wearied me with thine iniquities, yet I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my Names sake.* When the Jews did tire God with their distempered manners, and burthened him with their sinful courses, then the Lord for his own Name sake, would not so much as remember their iniquities against them.

Again observe, That sins, though they be never so hainous of themselves, yet if the soul can see them, and the heart be burdened with them, they are so far from hindering the work of faith, and from making thee uncapable of mercy, that they fit thee the rather to go to Christ The truth is (which I pray you take notice of,) it is not properly our unworthiness, but our pride and haughtiness that hinders us from coming to Christ; for we would have something from our selves, and not all from him. But to the distressed soul, that sees the vileness of his sins; I say, Suppose thy sins were fewer,

fewer; yet upon such a Suppose, thou wouldst not go to Christ, as perswaded of the freeness of his grace; but because thy sins are not many, and upon conceit that thou hast a worthiness in thy self, and wouldst bring something to Christ, and not receive all from him; therefore thou keepest back. And is it not plain (then) that it is thy pride, and thy self-conceitedness that hinders thee? Thou must have thus much grace and holiness; and Christ must not justifie the ungodly, but the godly man. But I tell thee, that, upon such terms, he will never justifie thee or any man while the world stands.

Object. But the soul replies again; *My sins are worse then so, not onely because they are many, but because of the mercy and salvation that I have rejected, and which hath been offered me from day to day.*

Answ. But I answer: This cannot hurt thee, provided that thou canst see those evils of thine: For then, though thou hast cast away the kind-

kindneſs of the Lord, yet the Lord will not caſt thee away, if thou wilt come and ſeek him earneſtly again and again: *For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs I was wrath* (ſaith God) *and I ſmote him; I hid my ſelf, and he went on frowardly in the way of his own heart.* If this could have hindred, *Judah* ſhould never have received mercy; but the Text ſaith, I have ſeen his ways, and will heal him; *Thou haſt played the harlot with many lovers, yet turn again to me, ſaith the Lord.* So then, there is no time paſt, if a man have but a heart to return. There is no limitation of the riches of Gods free grace, except the ſin againſt the holy Ghoſt; therefore ſaith Chriſt, *Rev.* 3. 20. *I ſtand at the door and knock*: Though he cry till he be hoarſe, and ſtand till he be weary, yet he ſtands ſtill: if any adulterous or deceitful wretch will open, the Lord will come in, and bring ſtore of comfort to him, and ſup with him.

Isa. 57. 17, 18.

Jer. 3. 1.

Oh, all that is true, ſaith the poor ſoul, had I but a heart to mourn for

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my baseness. See my sins I do, but this is my misery, I cannot be burdened with them; I have a heart that cannot break and mourn for dishonouring of God, and offending him so many ways. But I say,

Answ. This hurts not neither; provided that thy heart be weary of it self, because it cannot be weary of sin. *The Lord sheweth mercy because he will shew mercy:* It is not because thou canst please him, but because mercy pleaseth him. When did the Lord shew mercy to *Paul?* I say. When? but even when *Paul* did express most malice against him? *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* He persecutes Christ, and yet Christ pities him, and shews him mercy: and so the churlish *Jaylor*, when he was most opposite against the means of grace, the Lord even then shewed must compassion upon him. He that (before) resisted the means of grace was now brought home by those means that before he resisted.

Mich. 7. 18

Acts 16.

Object. But wo to me (saith the poor soul) you are now come to the quick

quick: this very word is like a Milſtone about my neck, and I in the Sea, ready to be ſunk for ever. This is the depth of that baſeneſs that lies on me, even this, That all the means can do no better upon me. Why? what though *Paul* and the Jaylor were bad enough, ſo bad as you ſay? Yet they were made better by the means: but this is my hopeleſs condition, That the means of grace prevail nothing on me. Oh, is there ſuch a heart in hell as I have? for how bad muſt it needs be, when all the means in the world can do it no more good! and now, me-thinks, I feel my heart more hard and inexorable under all Gods Ordinances, then when at firſt I believed. My condition therefore is (moſt certainly) hopeleſs, ſeeing the means that ſhould ſoften me do but harden me, and make me worſe.

This is the laſt plea whereby the Devil keeps in, and poſſeſſeth the heart of a poor heartleſs ſinner. But let me anſwer thee; and for anſwer, I ſay: This hurts not neither: for here *Anſw.*

here at least thou may'st have hope of mercy? And here observe these three things by way of answer; and know that.

1. First, the Word and means of grace do work good; if they make thee more sensible of thy hardness and deadness, though haply they work not that good, and after that manner that thou desirest; yet if they make thee to see thy baseness, thy hardness of heart, and dulness of spirit, in regard of that body of death which hangs upon thee, then the Word and They work in the best manner; because it is after Gods manner, howsoever not after thine. That Physick works most kindly, that makes the party sick before it works: so it is with the Word: before thou hadst a proud heart, and didst therefore lift up thy self in thine own abilities, and didst trust in thine own strength, and thou thought'st that thy care and the improvement of the means would work wonders: But now the Word works sweetly, when it makes thee ap-

apprehensive, that a wounded soul is the gift of God, not of man, nor of the means; when it makes thee look up to God for it, and to prize it when thou hast it; and to wait upon God with thy daily prayers, still to continue it so. To feel deadness, is life; and to feel hardness, is softness; onely remember this one Caution; Except there be some lust or distemper that thy heart hankers after; (for then the word will harden thee, because thou hardenest thy self) that one I say excepted, thou art in a good way.

Secondly, (mark this, I beseech you) Thou art the cause why thy heart is not softned, and why the Word works not upon thy soul: the distemper of thine own heart hinders the working of the Word, and dispensation of Gods providence; and the tenour of the Covenant of Grace. Thou thinkest to limit the holy One of *Israel*; but that may not be: for, his Covenant is a Covenant of Grace: and the Lord (who is free) will not stand bent to thy bow, or 2.

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give thee grace when thou wilt; for, *it is not for* us *to know the times and seasons.* What if the Lord will not give thee grace this year, nor the next, nor all thy life? if at the last gasp he will drop in a little of his favour, it is more then he owes thee. Therefore hear to day, and wait to morrow and continue in so doing, because thou knowest not when God may bless his own Ordinance. Complain not of delayes, but wait, for God hath waited for you long; and therefore if he make you wait for peace of conscience, and assurance of his love, he deals but equally with you, and as shall be best with you. God gives what, and when, and how he will, therefore wait for it.

Wait for mercy.

3. Rest not upon duties.

Thirdly, Know and consider, that thou hast rested upon thine own duties and endeavours, and so doest not go to God, that blessed both the means, and all the endeavours of this his way. The fault therefore is thine own. (I say) thine own, because thou restedst in thine own performances, and in the power of the means

means that thou apprehendeſt, and doeſt not go to God, that would have wrought more then all they can: for, did a man depend upon Gods power and mercy in his Ordinances, he ſhould always finde ſome proportionable ſuccour, as well when he finds no ſucceſs, as when he finds any. God ſometimes gives, and ſometimes delayes to give: but Gods love is as conſtant when he gives not, as when he gives. Therefore labour to quit all carnal confidence in holy duties. Reſt not in thine own performances, but look beyond all duties, to God, and deſire him to give thee the ſucceſs above them.

Watch how thy ſoul behaves it ſelf after the naked diſcharge of a duty; all quiet and calm, notwithſtanding he lives in a daily courſe and practice of ſin; ſo that he prays and lies, faſts and cozens, and yet this makes all whole: I tell you, it is an undoubted argument, that the ſoul did place a carnal confidence in his own performances, and as yet ne-

never attained to a Lord Christ in the duty: For he that seeks a Saviour in his duties, and rests not in self-performances, this man brings a Saviour, a Christ into his soul. And mark what follows: Christ brings pardoning virtue and purging virtue with him, and gives him more power against corruptions, and more suspition over his own soul then ever he had before: so that the soul begins to quarrel with it self, and lies down with shame, and says, What shall I think of my praying and hearing where is the virtue and power of it Did ever Christ hear my prayers, come into my soul by his Ordinances? Where is the purging virtue then, to clear me of my sins? Where is the purifying virtue to cleanse me my corruptions? This is a ground of gracious heart, that placeth not confidence in holy duties, but only in the Lord Christ.

Do not content your selves in this that you see a need of a Saviour, because your mindes are enlightned therein, and your reason perswades

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thereof, when in the mean time you place a kind of confidence in the duty performed and ſervice diſcharged and think thereby to bring Chriſt at your beck, and you in the mean while do what you pleaſe: this is a wonderful cunning craft of Sathan. This I ſay then; A man may ſee a need of a Saviour; but do not quiet thy ſoul, becauſe thou knoweſt it muſt be ſo, and becauſe thou findeſt by experience thou canſt not help thy ſelf, the guilt of ſin ſtill ſticks upon thee, and therefore a Saviour now muſt help thee: I ſay, content not thy ſelf with the meer notion of it, to ſay, I ſee it ſhould be ſo, and it muſt be ſo, and reſt thy ſelf contented in the performances of ſervices, and think to bring a Saviour at thy beck, to do what thou wilt for thy ſoul; this is a ſleight that Satan has inn'd to thy ſoul. Many think to have a ſovereign authority over Chriſt, when they have performed uties: ſo that he does not uſe the eans to be led to Chriſt, but he kes up his duties to be commanders

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of Christ, and that he may dispose of Christ for his own turn; so that he makes Christ an abettor of his own wickedness, not a subduer of his corruptions. This is a marvellous deceit, when men rest in their own abilities, and so abuse Christ. And this will appear in these particulars.

First, watch how thy heart is in the performance of duty. Doth thy prayer, and hearing, and performing of services make thee ventrous and fool-hardy to meddle with corruptions? then it's a certain ground thou placest carnal confidence in thine own performances. As for example, If a Professor should say, What if I do now and then sin? and what if I do now and then pilfer, and use false weights and measures? I'll but pray so much the more, and fast so much the oftner: will not my conscience then be satisfied? It shall be satisfied; I will command it: I will put in bail for my sin, and plead against it. Now, I beseech you, observe it; this praying and perform-

ing of duties, is meerly to command a Saviour to give allowance to sin, that so he may commit freely. As who would say, I have authoritie over my Saviour, and he shall pardon my sin, and give me allowance to commit sin. O the wretched villanie that is in this man's heart! Fearful is thy estate, whosoever thou art, that makest thy performances an abettor of thy distempers: so that thou dost thy duties not to convey Christ, that he may help thee to prevent sin, but that Christ may take off the venome and indignation of sin, that so thou mayst commit wickedness without either suspition or further distraction.

Many a man makes his services his Saviour's. For, he makes them the bottom to bear up his Conscience: the ground whereof is this. Haply he findes and feels by woful experience, what the fruits of sin are. He sees the venome of his corruptions, and the lamentable effects of all his sinful practices. He thought it before a fine thing to swear, and

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means as *Mediators*, and so fall short of Christ. But a gracious heart doth not onely *pray*, and *hear*, and *receive*, and use all possible means to obtain Christ, but is restless and unsatisfied till he enjoy and possess Christ in the means. He rests not upon the bare performance of any duty, neither thinks by virtue of any such his endeavours to get into Christ.

I will express this particular more fully in this manner. A rich Usurer that is sick of some disease, tell him such a Physician can cure him, but he stands upon sta e, and will not come without a great deal of charge: Charge (saith he) I do not stand upon that; I have money enough by me, enough to fetch him hither. Such a man now placeth all his confidence in his money. So when the soul sees the guilt of sin is not removed, and that *Conscience* is still snarling, and that (the Law condemning him) Christ is the onely Saviour, and he onely that can satisfie and cure all: But now, How shall Christ be procured? Why, His

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I will expreſs this particular more fully in this manner. A rich Uſurer that is ſick of ſome diſeaſe, tell him ſuch a Phyſician can cure him, but he ſtands upon ſta e, and will not come without a great deal of charge: Charge (ſaith he) I do not ſtand upon that; I have money enough by me, enough to fetch him hither. Such a man now placeth all his confidence in his money. So when the ſoul ſees the guilt of ſin is not removed, and that *Conſcience* is ſtill ſnarling, and that (the Law condemning him) Chriſt is the onely Saviour, and he onely that can ſatisfie and cure all: But now, How ſhall Chriſt be procured? Why, His

prayer, and *fasting*, and *performance* may command so much, and that by the power and merit of the work done. The voice of a Pharisee, and proper language of a Papist. But what promise is there for it? Within book none. But thus fools rest on their own performances, and so fall short of Christ and salvation.

Object. *But O* (saith a poor sinner) *fain would I go out of my self. I see too well now, that I have rested, and do rest upon duties done; but I cannot deny my self as I would.*

Answ. I answer, It is Sathan's subtilty to keep us in our selves, by endeavouring thus to make us go out of our selves. For by our own strength he would have us to do it; and perswades us we may. But this is the marvellous deepness of his, wherein he shews both malice and cunning in the superlative. For here he makes us believe (and we out of ignorance are perswaded as he would have us) that we have the staff in our own hands, that is, the power to get out of our selves. But is it so

O no, it is a ſupernatural work to be ſo quit of our ſelves. The ſame hand muſt bring us out of our ſelves, that muſt bring us to Chriſt: and this is *Self-denial*: and *Self-denial* is, When the ſoul knoweth it hath nothing, and therefore is ſo over-powred with the mighty hand of God, and the work of his Spirit, that it doth not ſo much as expect any power or ability from it ſelf, or from the creature, in the doing of any good: For it knows it is dead, and therefore cannot help it ſelf, much leſs can the creature do it any good. It therefore looks up to Heaven, and ſeeks all ſufficiency from God alone. For (obſerve it) whiles I thus think, that I have ability to go out of my ſelf; do I not then ſay, that I have a principle within me, to deny my ſelf? But it is not ſo; rather it is quite contrary; for to deny a man's ſelf, is to know that he hath no power in himſelf to do any ſpiritual duty: therefore we muſt look onely to the voice that calleth us, the voice of Chriſt, and know that he that

Self-denial what it is.

calls us from the ways of darkne
and out of our selves, must and w
bring us out. Therefore expect o
power from Christ to pluck thee o
of thy self, and to make thee a B
liever; for the same hand must
both, or it will never be.

I would not have a poor creatu
think thus with himself: If th
means, and these Ordinances will
me no good, nor work upon m
heart, I shall never have comfor
but speak thus unto God, and sa
In truth, Lord, I expect no pow
from my self nor from the means
but my resolution is, to look up t
him that hath hid his face yet fro
his poor servant. I will not loo
any lower, as here within my self, fo
any such power: No, Lord, but t
the highest in power and gifts. No
will I look to the Minister, or to th
means, but I will wait upon thee (O
Lord) and look up to thy power, t
work by thine own means. Re-
member what *Isaiah* saith: *Who is*
Isai 50.20 *amongst you that feareth the Lord, and*
obeyeth the voice of his servants, that
walk-

walketh in darkness, and hath no light of comfort, let him trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God. Then when all other things in the world fail, let the soul look up to the Lord, and get away from it self: For then it is the fittest time of all to meet with God. I would have a Christian chuse his time above all times, the fittest wherein to meet his Saviour, and to disappoint Satan: for as I said, it is the last refuge that the Devil hath; and if he miss of this, his force is gone for ever. For otherwise the sinner, partly seeing the beauty of grace, will not: and partly seeing the baseness of his own heart, dares not to come Christ.

But the next Complaint, in the next place, is want of sense and feeling, such as a Christian must have, and findes not. Therefore the distressed soul saith, *Alas, I never knew what it was to have the assurance of Gods love; I never received any evidence of Gods favour; and can I (then) think that I have faith? they* *Object.*

that believe, have their hearts filled with joy unspeakable and glorious; the Word saith as much. But I am a stranger to this joy; how then can I think that I have any work of Faith wrought in me?

Answ. I answer: This doth not hinder, either that thou hast not faith, or that thou mayst not come to God by believing. Onely remember these three particulars.

1. First, thou must not think to have this joy and refreshing before thou goest to the promise; thou must look for it when thou hast chewed and fed upon it: or wouldst thou have the Lord give thee the whole bargain at once, and before the match be made? This *joy* is a fruit that proceeds from *faith* after much wrestling; and doth not presently flow from faith, nor so soon as ever a Christian begins to believe, but after a time; and then the heart is joyous; but never filled with joy before believing. Afterwards, and when a man hath had the sweet dew of the promises dropping upon him: but many

many a day after, let him look for this joy.

Secondly, know that theſe joys, and this ſenſe and feeling, may be abſent from faith. For a man may have a good faith, and yet want the relliſh and ſweetneſs which he longs after. One may want what he deſires, and yet want neither life nor heat. A tree may want leaves and fruit, and yet want neither ſap nor moiſture: and a mans faith may be ſomewhat ſtrong, when his feeling is nothing at all. *David* was juſtified and ſanctified, and yet wanted this joy. And *Job* truſted upon God when he had but little feeling; as when he ſaith, *Thou makeſt me a Butt to ſhoot at; yet I will truſt in thee though thou kill me.* Therefore build not your comfort upon ſenſe and feeling, which is to build upon the ſand; but go to the promiſe, as to the Rock, for it.

But how comes this deſire after Chriſt?

I anſwer: There is no more but two affections in the ſoul, God infinitely wiſe having ſo framed it; and

these two are Hope and Desire. The Understanding says, Such a thing is profitable and comfortable if I had it; then Hope is sent ont to wait for that goodness: and if it comes not, then Desire is sent out to meet that goodness: Hope stands and waits for it; but Desire wanders up and down seeking and inquiring after a Lord Jesus, and goes from coast to coast, from East to West; O that I could, O that I might! and When shall I? And how may I come to the speech of a Lord Christ? As it was with the Spouse in *Cant.* when her Beloved was gone, she wandered up and down seeking of him, and inquiring of the watchmen if they did not see him her soul loved; so wanders from this thing to that thing, from this place to that place, and never ceaseth to see if she can get notice of Christ. It goes to Prayer, to see if that will entreat a Christ: it goes to the Word, to see if that will reveal a Christ: it goes to conference, to see if he can hear of Christ there: then it comes to the Congregation, and to the

the Sacrament, to ſee if it can hear of any news of a Lord Chriſt, and of mercy.

The ſoul thus continues wandring and ſeeking till at laſt the Lord Chriſt comes in to the ſoul, when the ſoul hath thus hungred and longed for him. At length the Lord Chriſt is pleaſed to ſhew himſelf in view: *Behold, thy King cometh*: ſo the Lord ſays, *Behold the Lamb of God that takes away* thy ſins. O thou poor broken-hearted ſinner, here is thy Saviour; he is come down from Heaven to ſpeak peace to thy ſoul in the pardon of thy ſins. Thou that hungreſt for a Chriſt, here he is, to ſatisfie thee: thou that thirſteſt after Chriſt, here he is, to refreſh thee. Thou that haſt long ſought him, he ſaith, Here I am, and all my merits are thine.

Now when the Lord Jeſus is pleaſed to preſent himſelf to the ſoul, now Deſire hath met with the Lord.

It is in this caſe with a ſinner, as it is with a Traitour who is purſued, aud takes a ſtrong Hold, and is there beſieged: And now he ſeeth no hope

hope of favour, nor no hope of escape, therefore he is content to submit, and lay his head on the block, that he may receive punishment for his offence: now coming to execution he hears an inkling from the Messenger there is yet hope he may be pardoned. The poor Traitour in the Prison with that is stirred up to hope. Nay then he hears by another Messenger from the King himself, if he will come to the Court, and sek unto his Majesty, and importune his Grace for mercy and favour, it's like he shall be pardoned. Then he makes haste, and Desire carries him to the Court to sue for favour from the King. So that now he will be listening and inquiring of every one there: Did you hear the King speak nothing of me? How stands the King's minde towards me? Pray how goes my case? Then some tells him, The truth is, the King hears you are humbled, and that you are sorry for what you have done: at last the King looks out of the window, and sees the malefactour, and says, Is this the Traitour?

Traitour? One ſays, Yes, if it pleaſe your Highneſs, this is the man, that is humbled and pleads for mercy, and deſires nothing ſo much as favour. Hereupon, the King being full of mercy, tells him, The truth is, his Pardon is a drawing, and coming towards him. With that his heart leaps in his belly, and his heart is enlarged towards his Majeſty, and he ſays; God bleſs your Majeſty; never was there ſuch a favourable Prince to ſo poor a Traitour. His heart leaps for joy, becauſe his Pardon is coming towards him. Haply it is not ſealed yet: Now when it is ſealed, and all done, the King calls him in, and delivers it.

So it is with a poor ſinner, he is the malefactour. You that have committed high Treaſon, you think not of it: but take heed, God will purſue you one day. Haply God lets you alone for the preſent, but he will ſurpriſe you on a ſudden, and Conſcience will pluck thee by the throat, and carry thee down to Hell. And now the Lord purſues him with a heavy

heavie stroke and indignation, and let flie at his face, and sets Conscience a work as a Pursuivant, and that says; These are thy sins, and to Hell thou must go: God hath sent me to execute thy soul. Now the poor soul sees he can no way escape from the Lord, and to purchase any favour he sees it impossible; therefore he is resolved to lie down at Gods feet, and hope. Now hope is a faculty of the soul to look out for mercy: as a man that is in expectation of the coming of his friend, goeth to the top of a hill, looks round about him, to see if he can understand any thing of his friend: so the soul hopes and waits, and stretcheth it self out for mercy. When will it be, Lord? When will this pardon come? The soul gets up, and stands as it were a tip-toe: O when will it come, Lord?

How does God stir up the heart to hope? It's worth the while to consider how this is maintained.

First, the Lord sweetly stays the heart, and perswades it that his sins are pardonable, and that the good he wants

wants may be ſupplied; this is a great ſupport to the ſoul. Hope is always of a good to come. Now when a poor ſinner ſets his ſins, the number of them, the nature of them, the vileneſs of them, the curſedneſs of his ſoul, that he can take no reſt; he ſees no reſt in the creature, nor in himſelf. Though he pray all day, yet he cannot get the pardon of one ſin. The ſoul is out of any expectation of pardon, or power of mercy in any thing he hath or doth: Though all means, all helps, though all men and Angels ſhould joyn together, yet they cannot pardon one ſin of his. Now the Lord lifts up his voice, and ſays from Heaven, Thy ſins are pardonable. O the infiniteneſs of Gods power! though the guilt of ſin is powerful to condemn the ſoul. But when the infinite power of the Lord is conſidered, as able to over-power all his ſins, this lifteth up the heart in ſome expectation that the Lord will ſhew mercy to a man; though it is a hard thing to hope, when the ſoul is thus troubled: (Can this heart be bro-

broke? Can these sins be pardoned? Can this soul be saved?) Now comes in the power of God. God can pardon them. Never measure the power of God by that shallow conceit of thine. All things are possible to God, though not to men. And as it is said of *Abraham*, *He hoped above hope*; he looked to the Lord that was able to do what he had promised: he considered not that he had a dead body, but that he had a living God to hope on. Justice cannot be so severe to revenge thee, as mercy is gracious to do good unto thee. If thy sins be never so many, God's Justice never so great; yet mercy is above all thy sins, above all thy Rebellions. This may support thy soul. So there you have the first ground to stir up Hope; Thy sins are pardonable. There is more power in God to shew mercy to thee, then power in sin to destroy thee. The Lord Jesus Christ came to seek and to *save that which was lost*; it was the scope of his coming. Now saith the boken and humble sinner, I am lost;

loſt. Did Chriſt come to ſave ſinners? then Chriſt muſt fail of his end, or I of my comfort. God ſays, *Come to me all that are weary and heavy laden.* I am weary; unleſs the Lord intended good to me, Why did he invite me, and bid me come? Surely he means to ſhew mercy to me.

O take heed of Deſpair. Queſtion thy eſtate thou mayſt, thou muſt; but to caſt away all hope, is very heinous in the eyes of the Lord. Caſt away all carnal confidence thou muſt, and yet thou muſt hope. *Let Iſrael hope in the Lord; for in the Lord, &c.* The Lord takes this very ill at our hands. Thou goeſt to the deep dungeon of thy corruption, and there thou ſayeſt, theſe ſins can never be pardoned: I am ſtill proud, and more ſtubborn: This diſtreſs God ſeeth not, God ſuccoureth not, his hand cannot reach, his mercy cannot ſave. Now mark what the Prophet ſaith to ſuch a perplexed ſoul, *Iſai.* 40.27. *Why ſayeſt thou, Thy way is hid from the Lord?* The Lord ſaith, Why ſayeſt thou ſo? *The young man*

ſhall

shall faint and be weary: but they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. Is any thing too hard for the Lord? You wrong God exceedingly: you think it's matter of humility, to count your selves so vile. Can God pardon such a wretches sin as mine? Mark that place of the Psalmist, they speak against the Lord, *Can the Lord prepare a Table in the wilderness?* They speak not against themselves, but against the Lord. So we speak against God, and charge God himself. It is true, says the soul, *Manasseh* was pardoned, *Paul* was converted, God's Saints have been received to mercy: But can my sin be pardoned? Can my soul be quickned? No, no, my sins are greater than can be pardoned, saith the despairing soul. Consider how injurious this is to God, to make the power of sin greater to condemn thee, than the power of God to save thee: to make the power of Satan stronger to ruinate thee, than the power of God to relieve thee, and succour thee. And what can you say more? and

what

what can you do more againſt the Lord? Is not this to make God an underling to Satan, and to ſin? This is juſt to ſay, The Almightineſs of God is weaker than the weakneſs of ſin; The ſufficiency of God is weaker than the malice of Satan, It is ſo; poor humble ſinners many times will make bitter complaints this way; and they think they ſpeak againſt themſelves. No, no, they ſpeak againſt the Lord. They ſpake againſt the Lord, when they ſaid, *Can the Lord prepare a Table in the wilderneſs?* So you ſpeak in this deſperate manner: Why truth, Lord, this proud heart will never be humbled; if any thing would have wrought, it would have been done ere this day. How many Sermons, how many Mercies, how many Judgments, how many Prayers! and yet this proud heart, this ſtubborn heart will not be reformed. You think you ſpeak againſt your ſelves now: No, no, you ſpeak againſt the Lord. And know, this is one of the greateſt ſins thou committeſt, to ſay thy

ſins

ſins cannot be forgiven.

Secondly, as this ſin is injurious to God, ſo it is dangerous to thy own ſoul: it is that which takes up the bridge, and cuts off all paſſages; and there can no Spiritual comfort nor conſolation come into the ſoul of a poor ſinner, *Luke* 3.15. *Every ditch muſt be filled, and then all fleſh ſhall ſee the ſalvation of the Lord.* What are theſe Ditches? Why nothing elſe but thoſe deep gulfs and ditches of Deſpair: and unleſs theſe be filled, no man can ſee the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. The truth is, this Deſpair of the ſoul is that which cuts the ſinews of mans comfort, and takes off the power and edge of all the means of grace; it daunts all a mans endeavours; nay, it plucks up endeavours by the very roots: for that which a man deſpairs of he will never labour after. It's here as with a man in the pangs of death: unto ſuch a man all things are unavailable for his good: his bed will not eaſe him, meat will not refreſh him, chafing will not revive him; at laſt

we

we ſay He is gone, he is a dead man; friends leave him, Phyſicians leave him: They may go and pray for him, and mourn for him, but they cannot recover him. So this Deſpair of ſoul makes a man caſt off all hope, and lie down in a forlorn condition, expecting no good to come. Alas, ſaith the poor ſoul, what skilleth for a man to pray? What profiteth it a man to read? What benefit in all the means of Grace? The truth of it is, the ſtone is rolled upon me, and my condemnation is ſealed for ever, and therefore I will never look after Chriſt, grace and ſalvation any more. Let him come to hear the Word, and mark how he caſts off the benefit of it. It was marvellous ſeaſonable and profitable; it was the good Word of God unto ſuch as have ſhare therein; why then may not you expect benefit there-from? No, ſaith the ſoul, the time of Grace is paſt, the Day is gone. If Miniſters would pray for him, and good people pray for him, he bids them ſave their labour; for Hell is his portion,

and

and his condemnation is sealed in Heaven. See now, and consider what desperate danger Despair brings to a poor heart, and carries him beyond the reach of mercy. That's a sweet passage of *Davids*, *Psal.*77.7. *Will the Lord cast me off for ever?* I *said, this is my infirmity*, saith the Text. The word in the Original, *This is my sickness:* as who should say, This would be my death: What, is mercy gone for ever? then my life is gone, then is all my comfort gone, my hope gone: Therefore take heed of this, it takes off the edge of all our endeavours and Gods Ordinances that might do us good.

Secondly, this marvellously condemns that great sin of Presumption; a sin more frequent, and if it be possible, more dangerous. The Presumption of carnal hypocrites that bolster themselves up with marvellous boldness in their course. It is a true here, and I beseech you observe it, as they said, *Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands*: Despair hath slain his thousands, but pre-

presumption his ten thousands. That men may swear, and lie, and cozen, and break all Commands, and yet hope to be saved. They hope Grace will save them, and yet resist Grace. They hope Jesus Christ will save them, and yet oppose Christ. This is that which hath slain many thousands among us; and they are few that have not split upon this Rock. And therefore I say, This serves to reprove the baseness of such hypocrites that boast themselves, and compare their hopes with the hopes of the Saints. It is true, say they, I cannot walk so freely, I cannot repeat a Sermon, I have not those parts that they have; yet I hope to be saved as well as they. This is that which hath slain so many thousands of souls that are now roaring in Hell; and they may thank presumption for it.

Now this Hope is not the Hope of the Saints. The Hope of the Saints is a grounded Hope: but these hopes hang upon some idle pleas, and fooliſh pretences, and some carnal reasons: But I tell you they will fail,

fail, and sink into the bottomless Pit ere they are aware. It is the command and counsel of *Peter*, That *every man should be ready to give an account of his faith and hope that is in him.* Look to the Reasons that carry you, and to the Arguments that perswade you; see they be not groundless and foolish hopes. You hope to be saved, and you hope to go to Heaven and you hope to see the face of God with comfort. Look about, I say good Hope hath good Reasons, grounded Hope hath grounded Reasons.

Thirdly, the Saints of God many times are deprived of comfort: not because God with-holds it, but because they put it from themselves and will not have it, though he offer it; as *David*; *My soul refused comfort:* he was as a sullen childe that will not eat his milk, because he can not have it in the golden dish. Sometimes, and because God doth not for us what we would, we will have nothing at all. These are the main hinderances, and I might adde many more: for carnal Reason

Psal. 77.

very fruitful this way, and we through our own follie, and the Devil's craft, are apt to abuse things: and to make them hinderances in our way to happiness eternal. I come now to the cures of all the impediments, where, if we had the wisdom and care we should have, we might break through them all to Christ. The means (especially) are four, whereby we may be inwardly strengthened against them all, and be at last able to overcome, and put them to foil for ever.

Helps to come to Christ.

The first Cure and Help is this; We must not look too long, nor pore too much, or unwarrantably, upon our own corruptions within, so far as to be feared or disheartened by them from coming to the riches of God's grace. For this is a sure and everlasting truth, That whatsoever sight of sin unfits a man for mercie, when he may take it, and it is offered, that sight of sin is ever sinful, though it have never so fair an outside of sorrow and deep humiliation. Namely, as when we think, and say (as often

we do) Had I a soul so throughly humbled, and bruised, and softened and so forth, I could do well enough. And thus the Devil keeps us in sin, by poring too long and much upon our sins; as thinking thereby to get free them. But such a course is a sinful course. Tell not me of sorrow, and repentance, and humiliation; all that sorrow, and humiliation, and repentance is naught that keeps a man from receiving mercie, when there is need, and it is offered. See this in *Abraham:* he had this promise, that he should have a Son in his old age. And, *He being not weak in faith* Rom. 4. 19. *regarded not his old age or deadness, nor the barrenness of* Sarah's *womb, but believed in him who had promised it.* There he rests, and there he stays, he saw his bodie was dead, yet there was a living promise: and what though *Sarah's* womb was barren, yet the promise was fruitful. He knew his own deadness and her barrenness; but he stood not long there. As *Abraham* therefore, we may see our sins, and consider of

True godly sorrow what it is.

many weaknesses; but must not so settle upon them, or consider of them as to be hindered by them from coming to God for mercie, which he freely offers us, and we stand in need of: for, while the soul of a man is daily plodding upon his own miserie and distempered life, these two things follow.

First, we stop the stream of God's promise, and let down the sluce against it, so that the promise cannot enter into us.

And secondly, we set open the stream and floud-gate of corruption, and make it to run most violently down, and to floud in upon us; and in the end to over-whelm us. Now the inconvenience arising hereby is enough to slay the best Christian in the world; for what can a man get out of his corruption? he can have no more thereof than is to be had; and it is in vain to look for comfort where it is not to be had: all this and the least of all this may dishearten us, but will never encourage us, or put heart into us. See the humilitie

and wisdom of the woman of Ca*naan*; she follows Christ; but h listens not to her, but gives her a sor foil, and calls her *Dog*; and saith you Gentiles are *Dogs*; and th Gospel of Grace and Salvation i the *Childrens bread*. Now if sh had onely considered the words o Christ, and onely looked into her se and her own baseness, she ha never come to have received eithe mercie or comfort from him. Bu she saith, Truth Lord, I am a *Dog* yet the *Dogs eat of the crumbs tha fall from their Masters Table*. Thi was her sure resolution: wherei there are two things which expre and set forth the frame of a gracio heart; a heart that is truly wise t attend to its own baseness wit faith: and that is, her *humility* an *wisdom*: as if she had said, Tho sayest I am a *Gentile*, and a *Dog* I confess it: there's her humilitie Yet though I am a Dog, I will not go out of doors, but lie under the Table for mercie: there's her wisdom And thus she, and so we must, and

should

ſhould when our corruptions (as I ſaid) floud in upon u, and we ſee our ſelves quite loſt, and damned in our ſins, we muſt then ſay, In truth, Lord, I am as bad as thy Word can make me, yet let me not flie from mercie, but lie at the feet of my Saviour's mercie, till he look upon me as once upon *Peter*; *Luke* 22.61.

It is fit, and we ought to ſee our ſins: but ſtay we muſt not too long here: ſee them we muſt, but not liſten on them, ſo as to ſhackle us from coming to Chriſt. I have ſaid it, and will ſay it. That that ſight of ſin which doth not drive a man to Chriſt for mercie, is ever ſinful. Labour therefore to ſee thy ſins, and that thus,

How to ſee ſin aright.

First, ſee thy ſins in the Royal Law, in the right Glaſs; a Glaſs that will preſent them ſuch as they be; and look not off till thou haſt ſeen them ſo.

Secondly, ſo ſee them, as that by ſuch a holy gaze at them, thou mayſt finde an utter inſufficiencie in thy ſelf to ſatisfie for them.

Thirdly, and so see them, that thou maist by that sight behold an absolute necessitie of Christ to succour thee, and then away speedily to him that can onely help thee, and dwell no longer on thy sins, but go to the throne of grace, where is plentiful redemption, whence issues out pardons in abundance to remove that guilt that sin hath brought upon thy soul; and where is power enough to enable thee to be more than conquerour over thy corruptions. Briefly every soul should say thus: It is true, Lord, my sins are many and great, for I have departed from thee, the Fountain of bliss: But shall I go on, and so further from thee and persist in evil? God forbid. And this while I speak to broken-hearted Christians. You profane ones, you have your portion already, and shall have more of it in Hell hereafter: therefore for a while stand you by, and let the children come to the bread.

Isai 66.2. opened. *The Lord looks to him that is of an humble and contrite heart, and that trem-*

trembles before him. A poor creature cannot but obſerve every word of God, and tremble at every truth. Whoſe meditation is ſuch as this? Here is ſalvation indeed, but it is not mine; here is mercie, but I have no part in ſo great mercie; and thus he ſhakes at every apprehenſion of every word of God, concluding certainly that he ſhall never enjoy any part of it. But mark what the Text ſaith, *The Lord looks at ſuch a trembling ſoul*; that is, he caſts ſweet intimations of his goodneſs and love into him, and ſaith, Thou poor trembling ſinner, to thee be it ſpoken, I have an eye towards thee in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Therefore he further ſaith;

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, ſpeak comfortably to Jeruſalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accompliſhed, and her iniquity is pardoned: tell Jeruſalem ſhe is accepted, tell her what my minde is. Iſai. 40. 2.

And here he goes on, and ſaith to his Miniſter, Speak to the heart of ſuch an humbled Penitential, and tell him from ME, nay tell him from Hea-

ven, and tell him from the Lord Jesus Christ, and from under the hand of the Spirit, that his person is accepted, and his sins are all of them done away, and he himself shined upon in great mercie.

Here *Ephraim* is the picture of a soul truly humbled, in whose behaviour we may see the behaviour of a true penitent toward God, and God's dealing towards him. The Text saith, Jer. 11. 18, 19, 20. *Surely I have heard Ephraim bemoaning himself* (there's the heart broken and thirsty) *thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised; turn thou me, and I shall be turned; thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented, and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh, I was ashamed, yea even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.* Thus the sinner, as if he should have said, I am the wretch that have seen all the means of grace in abundant measure, and yet never profited under the hand of any. The Lord hath corrected me, but I would not be tamed; and he instructed me, but I would

would not learn, Lord turn me. Thou art my God, I have nothing in my ſelf; Nay, now I ſee the evils which before I never perceived; And I obſerve the baſeneſs of my courſe, which before I conſidered not. Now I am aſhamed of my abuſe of grace ſo plainly revealed: I am even now confounded with the ſenſe of thoſe abominations my ſoul did formerly take pleaſure in. This may be conceived to be the mourning of a poor much-broken ſinner. And now mark God's anſwer; *Ephraim is my Son, he is a pleaſant Childe for ſince I ſpake againſt him I do earneſtly remember him ſtill, therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will ſurely have mercy upon him.* As much as to ſay, I obſerved all thoſe ſecret ſighs, I conſidered all thoſe tears, I heard all thoſe prayers, and took notice of all thoſe complaints, and my bowels even yearn towards this poor dejected ſinner, an humble ſoul that ſeeks to me for mercie. The truth is, I will embrace him with my loving kindneſs. This for the

first means of help.

2. Help. Now, the second means of Cure is this, Take heed of judging thy estate by carnal Reason without the Rule, which is commonly the fashion and fault of poor distressed spirits, who pass fearful sentence against themselves upon groundless Arguments, and say, I never found it. I feel no such thing, and I fear it is not so. But in this we hear but carnal pleas, coming out of Satan's forge, and by his help, from our selves, against our selves, for we judge our selves by them. But I ay, Take heed of this wile of Satan's, and make conscience of this as much as of any other fault, as much as of swearing, stealing, whoring, or murder; for this is as truly a sin as those, though not so great; yet a far greater sin than you imagine. Consider this thou humble-hearted Christian, for to thee I speak. Therefore when upon these grounds thou concludest that thy case and estate is naught, see and consider against how many Commandments thou offend-

The danger of judging our selves rashly.

est

eſt. Firſt, thou diſhonoureſt God, and the work of his grace, by denying that which God hath done for thee; alſo, and ſpeakeſt *unreverently* againſt him; beſides, thou art a *murderer*, for that thou woundeſt thine own ſoul. Further, thou robbeſt thy ſelf of much comfort, and ſo art a *thief*; and thou *beareſt falſe witneſs* againſt thy ſelf, yea, againſt Chriſt, and the Spirit of Chriſt, and the work of grace already wrought in thee. Alſo, thou joineſt with the Devil againſt the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Are theſe no ſins?

But thou wilt ſay, I ſpeak as I think. Yet that hinders not, but that thou beareſt falſe witneſs. As we ſee, if a man affirm ſuch a one is a Drunkard, and knows it not, this man bears falſe witneſs, becauſe though the man be indeed a Drunkard, yet it is more than he knows. So thou ſaieſt, that thou haſt nothing, when thou doeſt but onely fear it, and ſuſpect it, and doeſt not feel it. I ſpeak this the rather, becauſe of the ſinful diſtemper that creeps

creeps in upon the hearts of many broken-hearted Chriſtians; and ſo as that out of a ſelf-will'd road of carnal reaſon, and a vile haunt that they have gotten, their hearts are perſwaded that they do well to do ſo, and that they can never be well, except they do ſo.

But they that are ſuch (mark what I ſay) when reaſon is plain againſt them, and plain Scripture evidenceeth the contrary, do not ſo much attend what the Miniſter ſaith, as they ſtand and invent how they may anſwer the Miniſter: and (ſo) put away their own mercie. Therefore let the fear of God fall upon every poor ſoul that heareth this; and let him know, that howſoever he hath taken or given leave to himſelf, or taken up the waſters, by taking up pleas againſt the truth: yet now he is to change the courſe, to go aſide, and to mourn apart for his miſpriſion: alſo to wonder that the Lord hath not, all this while, taken away all the comforts of his grace, and all the motions of his Spirit from him.

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The Prophet *David* prays the Lord *to turn away his eyes from beholding vanity.* Now if God must do that; that is, turn away our eyes, that they see not; much more must he turn away our hearts that they attend not on lying vanities. We must attend God and the voice of his Spirit; but to listen to carnal pleas (which we have no warrant to do) is to sin deeply, and to hurt our own soul both deeply and dangerously. No man would deal with a Cheater. Carnal Reason is a Cheater, therefore we should not heed it, unless we would resolve to be cozened. And now if the danger of the sin cannot make us to do this; let the sorrow that will come of it constrain us. The Prophet saith, *Behold, all you that kindle a fire, and that compass your selves about with the sparkles that ye have kindled; this shall you have at my hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow.* These are the Prophet's words, nay, God's by him. And now I will tell you what is meant by *sparkles*, and what by *fire.* In the old

Psal. 119. 37.

Isai. 50. 11.

old Law (as some of you know) there was heavenly fire kept continually upon the Altar of the Sanctuary, (which shadowed out the will and wisdom of God in his Word,) and there was also strange fire, that is, divers sparkles of mens *own* imaginations and conceits. Concerning this, every poor creature carries his Tinder-box about him, and is ever kindling of it. But such a fire much provoked God once, and so doth still. So saith the Text; in which are two things. First, that the heart of man will naturally invent carnal Reasons and pleas against it self, and be setled upon them as upon the dregs of a vessel that is at the bottom. Secondly, that the issue that followeth is fearful: For it is said, *This shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in* your own *sorrow*. Now then, when the Scriptures are clear, and reasons upon it evident, yet you will have your own devices and ways; Thus much I must tell you, *You shall lie down in sorrow* at last, and you may thank your selves for it.

Away

Away then with your Tinder-boxes, abaſe your ſelves before the throne of Grace, and be at laſt wiſe to ſalvation ſo nigh.

Ho, every one that thirſteth (ſaith God by his Prophet) *come and buy without money, take of the well of the water of life, and live for ever freely.* Many a poor Miniſter, while he preached the good Word of God, would fain leave his commoditie behinde him, while he ſaith, You muſt have it; and you ſhall have it; it is your portion, and belongs of right unto you. Thus we are fain even to force God's favours upon you. Hereupon we beſeech you to believe, and we entreat you for the Lord Jeſus ſake to receive mercie, and to humble your hearts.

Thus we deal with you in fatherly terms. But will you take ſo great and ſo good a commoditie from us?

No, Beloved; many ſweet promiſes, and many admirable precious things of grace and ſalvation are revealed, but men are negligent to take for

for themselves: in this case, our markets stand upon our selves; we pass not to lay out any thing here to benefit: some carnal plea or other marrs all. This argues plainly the small estimation that we have of Christ. But the poor hungry sinner, one that is apprehensive of his own weakness and feebleness, longs till the *Feast-day* cometh, that he may partake of these and such delicates. O how carefully doth he listen, and how diligently doth he attend what the Minister saith? and if the Word come home to his conscience, enlightning his heart, and reproving him of his ways; then he cries out, O, I am in great trouble; good Lord comfort me; I am full of doubts, good Lord resolve me; I am ignorant in spiritual things, good Lord teach me. I have a proud, stout, stubborn heart; good Lord humble me. He was never better than now. Therefore take this for a general Rule; That a good heart is never better at ease than when the Word works most, and most biting-

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ly. Contrarily, a wicked graceleſs perſon is never better than when the Word works leaſt, or never a whit upon him. But when he thinks the Miniſter will come cloſe to his ſore and ſoul, he will not be at home that day; he will be ſure to be out of the Town, or not in place. He knows the Word would awaken him, and affright him, and he cannot bear the blow, therefore he keeps away, and ſhuns the hearing of the Word, when it ſhould work to his reformation any way.

And now, for a third Help, let us be marvellouſly warie and watchful that we enter not into the liſts of any diſpute with Satan, upon points which are beyond the reach of man; as thus to ſay, I am not elected, therefore God will not look upon me to do me any good. Or, it is a vain thing for me to uſe the means of mereie, my time of mercie being out. O the days of grace that I have ſeen, when the Lord knocked ſweetly at my heart, and was pleaſed to reveal my ſins unto me at ſuch a time, 3. Help.

time: but then (hard-hearted wretch that I was) I shut the door upon him, and now he is gone and past; and now there is no hope for the visit of grace, or that Christ should return again to shew me any mercie. If the Devil can have thee here, all thy comfort is gone; for upon this ground a man shall never receive rest to his soul, come what days will. And how can he? For if he cannot judge of, or know comfort, how shall I the Minister be able to give, or he (the Hearer) to take it.

And here look as it is with a poor travelling man, one that falleth among Thieves, who come and promise to carrie him a nearer way, but bring him into a Wood whither no passengers come, and there they do what they will unto him: so it is with a poor soul, when the Devil gets him into these unwarranted disputes, as it were, large Wildernesses of God's eternal counsel, where are no passengers, and therefore he cannot but be void of helps and succour, and so, as that Satan may now exercise

cise his full pleasure, and whole malice by terrifying his poor desolate soul. To avoid which streight, observe these three Rules.

First, let the soul in this case bear upon the Almightiness of the power of God, who said to *Abraham*, *I am God All-sufficient*. For if thou be perswaded of the All-sufficencie of God, that assurance cannot but stay thee (slipping) from falling. And here remember that God can do more than thou canst think. He is able, and doth thee good, though thou know it not. And further, consider that the soul cannot doubt of God's will, but with that very doubt makes some question of his power. This for the first Rule. Gen. 17. 1.

For the second, and secondly, it bids check to thine own heart for medling with God's secret, and for prying so into his Closet of hidden Counsels. For no man should go beyond his bounds; and it appertains not to thee to look into this Ark of matters sealed up. *Secret things belong to God, but revealed things* Deut. 29. 9

thinge belong to us. And *who hath*
1 Cor. 1. 2, 16. *known the minde of God*; saith *Paul.* Mark this, you that will be climbing up the Ladder of God's eternal Predestination, and going up into the Skies, to know what God's secret minde is. Keep your stations wisely; for neither the Devil, nor all the Devils in Hell, ever knew the minde of the Lord. When *Jonah* cried against *Nineveh*, saying, Within fourty days all you, that is, all you Drunkards, and Adulterers, and Murderers, and others, shall be destroyed; Mark here how the King resolves: his words are, *Who can tell if the Lord*
Jona. 4. 19 *will repent, and stay his fierce wrath, that we perish not?* Therefore when the Devil tells thee thus much, and saith, God hath appointed a way to salvation, and you have had the means, and did not profit by them, therefore God will never shew you mercie, nor give you grace. Thus the Devil. But how can he tell that? Surely all the Devils in Hell cannot tell it; Say with thy self; Let me walk in that course which God hath appointed

pointed and commanded, and do that which I ought; then I may ſay, and with comfort ſay it; Who knows but God may break the heart of a proud, rebellious, contrarying ſinner, ſuch as mine is, and ſuch as I am? None verily but God knows whether, or no. The third and laſt Rule follows.

Thirdly, therefore, meaſure not the riches of God's love, and the ſweetneſs of his ſaving grace according to your own conceits; nor do you think that becauſe you cannot conceive it, therefore God will not do it, for *Iſaiah* ſaith, *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts*; that is, All you wicked ones, and you that have lived lewdly, return from your wicked ways, and vain thoughts, and he will abundantly ſhew mercie. 3. Iſai 55.7. 1.9.

But will the Lord pardon all my ſins, ſaith the doubting ſoul? *I cannot think it: If I my ſelf were a god, I ſhould never paſs by ſuch intolerable things as have been done by me.* Object.

But I anſwer; Becauſe you cannot, you Anſw.

you think God cannot, or will not? Yes, saith the Lord, I can abundantly pardon: for my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor my ways as your ways. A poor creature thinks his sins are unpardonable, and that he shall never get assurance of God's favour, or hope of his love. But you are *men*, saith the Lord, and have finite thoughts; but I am a *God*, and my mercies infinite, when you think I will have no mercie.

Object. But were ever any such received to mercie as I, saith the drooping soul and therefore why should I be the onely man?

Answ. To this I say: when Christ had wrought many strange miracles, the people said there were never any such things done in *Israel*. And therefore it is plain and not to be doubted, that God can do things that never the like were done: *He doth great things past finding out, and wonders without number*, saith *Job*: and therefore judge not either God's power or love by the scantling.

The best Christians are most suspi-

tion

tious of themselves, and none fuller of doubts and fears than those that have least cause to fear or doubt that their estates are broken and bad. Therefore Satan makes it his chief work to grieve or terrifie such. Besides, their own distrustful hearts are always readie to join issue with his false reports against them, raising false surmises against themselves, and putting mercie from them; as if they were hired by the Devil to take his part in pleading against their own sure salvation. Therefore it is worth the time to hear what *David* saith, *Psal.*42. *The Lord shall command his loving kindness in the morning.* It is a phrase taken from *Princes* and great men, whose words are a Law of Command. For so God will send forth, as by a Commandment, his loving kindness to a truly humble Christian. As if it should be said; Go *love* and *everlasting mercy*, take thy Commission; and I charge thee go to that poor broken-hearted sinner, go to that poor, hungrie and thirstie soul; go and prosper, and prevail, and stamp

Psal.42.8.

ſtamp my love upon his heart, and there let it ſtand whether he will or no. Thus the Lord charges his loving kindneſs to do good to poor ſinners, and by his own Almightineſs bears up the ſoul, when it is ready to ſink under the weighty burden of its many tranſgreſſions.

Object. But what? Shall I have mercie? No, no, (ſaith the doubting heart.) Will the Lord Jeſus accept me? No ſurely. Could I pray ſo, and ſo, and had I theſe and theſe parts, and could I perform duties after this and this manner, then there were ſome hope, but all is contrary, and therefore wo and alas, there is no mercie for me.

Anſw. But to anſwer this alſo, Let me tell thee, who ever thou art, that God invites thee in particular, as by name, and that all the ſweetneſs in Chriſt and in his precious promiſes appertains to thy poor ſoul, and thou haſt as great an intereſt in them as any ſervant of God in the world whatſoever.

No, no, ſaith the trembling ſoul

I cannot believe that such a wretch as I, shall, or can go to Heaven. It cannot be. Heaven shall rather fall, than I come there. Thus the discouraged sinner knocks off mercie, and shuts the door against himself.

And now, when all carnal reasonings, and high soaring imaginations, (as *Paul* calls them) have raised up strong Holds against mercie and comfort; when the Word cannot for the present setle peace in the unquiet soul; God is made at last to command his loving kindness, and send it with a Commission from Heaven, and to say unto it, I charge you break open the doors of such a reluctant sinner, rend off that veil of ignorance that is before his eyes: silence all his doubts and fears: And when this is done, I charge you go home to that broken soul, and to chear and refresh it with t e sense of my sweet favour; and with the assurance of my love to fill it.

While we were Enemies, (saith the Apostle) *Christ died for us*. And here the Lord sends from Heaven to a poor Rom. 5. 8.

miserable creature, and saith, Commend my love, commend my mercie to such a distressed Soul, and tell it, Though it hath been an Enemie to me, yet I am a Friend to it. Tell it, Though it hath been a Traitour to me, I have been a good King to it. And tell it, that though it hath been a Rebell to me, I have yet been a loving God to it. Tell the man (whose heart that is) that his sins are pardoned, his person accepted, and that his soul shall be saved. Tell him his sighs and groans are not lost, and that his prayers are heard in Heaven. Let him know that the Lord Jesus died for sinners when they were sinners. Make all this good to his Soul, I charge you before you come back. So much for the third Help.

Help 4. The fourth Cure is this. And it is specially to be observed by a Christian above all, in his proceedings with himself, in Bar of Judgement; and that is, Pass no hasty Sentence against thy self, but according to the evidence of the Word. If thou art to be approved, let the Word of God

do

do it: and let the same word examine thee, if thou comest to be examined. If this Word speak for thee, no matter, though all Men and Angels speak against thee; and if it condemn thee, no matter who speaks for thee: By it, thou risest or fallest to thine own Master. What though some wrangling fellow step in, and will be determining Causes before the Judge come; Shall his word stand? No: therefore a wise man will stay till the Judge himself do come, and wait upon the Judgement of his mouth. Deal thou no otherwise with thine own Soul: put not the case to be tried by a companie of pievish carnal Reasons, but stay till the Word (which is the Judge) come; and judge thy self by that, and hold to that for thy life, and the life of thy Soul. *The light is that which manifesteth all things*, saith the Apostle. His meaning is, The light of the Word, and the evidence of God's truth, manifested to the souls of God's people; These pr perly are the Judge: the other are but Ephes 4.13

wrangling cases not to be admitted. And here sense and feeling grounded upon carnal matter, are like foggs and mists which make a man in case that he cannot see his way: but upon clearing up his state and condition is open before him: and then it is manifest what it is. *Learn of me,* (saith our Saviour) *and you shall finde rest to your souls:* And the Psalmist saith, *I will inquire what the Lorp will say.* So say thou; I will not hearken what carnal Reason will say; I will hear what God saith. The want of this is cause why we have so many distractions and disquiets, and why we are still in our doubtings; even because he that teacheth, and can perswade with us, is a deluder.

Mat. 11. 29

And hereof it is, that the poor soul saith, What? Shall I have an interest in Christ? Shall I have title to the promises? Nay, this belongs to those that are broken-hearted. Indeed if I had such power against corruption, such heavenly mindedness, and this and that precious grace, there were

were some hope; but I am so full of weakness, and many times led captive by such a rebellious heart, that it is too apparent I never had saving grace: nay, I fear I never shall have it truly wrought in my soul.

This you say, poor soul: but who told you so? and where learned you that Religion? I am sure you never learned it of Christ. For who, or what word tells you, if I have such a load of corruptions, I shall never have grace? not the Word of Christ, I am sure; wherefore I charge you hold to the truth of the Word: Learn of *me*, saith *Christ*, and put not your cause to be decided by carnal Reason; neither regard what it telleth you: for if you take that way and turn not back, you can never come to Christ, no way to him that way. Learn of the Lord Christ, (for his Word is faithful, and his Promise sure) and there you shall finde a Tower of rest as strong as Mount *Sion*. It is that Word whereby we shall be judged at the last great Day, when sense and

feeling shall be cast over the Bar for Deceivers, and never come into Court again. And thus much of the four Cures; it rests that I now propound four Rules, by which a man may know how to order himself, and so to walk, that he may keep a strait course by the Word, and not turn aside to one hand or other from that Guide of his way. And thus walking he may get into his hands the Evidences that can assure him of a rest perpetual, and establish his minde with perfect peace. For they work none iniquitie that walk in this way.

Rules to direct a Christian how to use the Word of God for his Evidence, or assurance with peace.

Rule 1. The first of these Rules teacheth to use the Word of God aright: for as thou must in all things that concern thy soul repair to the Word; so thou must consider thine own uprightness by it, and see what work is in thy soul that is able to answer the Word, and to testifie that the

the work of grace is there. And here be ſure to take thy Soul at the beſt: do not always pore upon the worſt that is in it, nor upon thy failings, nor that that can onely accuſe thee; but if there be any thing there that may juſtly ſpeak for thee, neglect not that. It is an injuſtice for any Court to hear one ſide, and not another. The Scripture is a Text of Juſtice, and the Lord doth not lie at catch with his Children, but takes them at the beſt: as *Rom.*4.22. it is therefore ſaid of that, *Abraham believed the promiſe, and it was imputed to him for righteouſneſs.* Indeed, as in the 12. of *Gen.* he had ſome doubtings; but God took him at the beſt: and ſpeaks this his Faith. So *Sarah* is ſpoken of, as of a gracious Woman, and of a patern for women, by calling her Husband *Lord*; which was a ſign of reverence to her Husband, and an humble heart to the Lord, and yet we read that ſhe derided the Meſſage of the Lord by the Angel: the Lord buries that, and onely ſpeaks of that which was to

1 Pet. 3. Gen. 18. 12.

her commendation, and so took her at her best too. Now as the Lord dealt with these, so should we with our selves: whatsoever is found sincere and upright in us, that should we observe, as well as that which is not so; nay, that rather and before the other. If a man should have his Cause handled in any Court of Justice after this fashion; namely, that (there) should onely be observed what is failing in the Cause, and never that that makes for it; the best Cause that is might go to ground: therefore the Court will hear all read: as every Bond or Bill that shall come in; and every matter of agreement; briefly, every thing: the crie will be, Let all be read. Again, suppose a man have a Bond or other Instrument in Court, and that the Lawyer only doth open and read the failings in it, and that which seems to make against the partie: If the Judge onely hear that, how can it but go against that side? Therefore that partie saith, Good my Lord, hear all. Now when all is read, those defects are corrected, and

the cauſe goes well, which had not been ſo, if that Bond, or Deed, or other Inſtrument had been read to halves, not throughly. So when men ſhall bring in ſo many and main Indictments againſt themſelves, and ſay, O what pride and ſtubbornneſs is in my heart! O how weak am I, and dull, and dead, and backward to holy duties; O how careleſs of enjoying communion with God! How negligent in ſifting and trying my own heart, in watching over my ſenſes, and mourning in ſecret for my daily failings! Though this were ſo, yet if men will ſee no more (and theſe too much) no marvel if they trouble their own houſe; or if Satan by their own words judge them. To ſuch an one therefore I ſay, All that thou ſayeſt may be true; but art not thou troubled with theſe failings? and are they not the greateſt grief that thy ſoul hath? Yea, ſaith the poor Soul, I confeſs my heart is vexed, and my ſoul grieved for them; and I could be content to be any thing that I could not

be so. Now hear on this side, and take the best. For, as it is with a man's hand and the staff, so it is here; I compare the promise to a staff; you know the back of a man's hand cannot take hold of the staff, but the palm of his hand can. So turn thou the right side of thy soul to the promise, and then thou mayst take by it: but we take not by it, because we turn the back side of our hearts to the promise: and then the soul saith, O my stubbornes is great, and mine inabilities grievous, and corruptions many. But this is the wrong side; which will ever hinder thee from taking hold of the promise. But turn to the right side, and then say, My soul hates these, and my soul is right weary of them. O this is the right side; turn to that, and thou art well. This for the first Rule.

Rule 2. Now for the second; and secondly, Labour to have thy Conscience setled and established in that truth which now out of the Word thou hast gotten to bear witness of the work.

work of grace in thee. For if there be any want of the assurance of God's love, and if the evidence of the work of grace come not roundly in, but there be some guilt of sin still remaining; Conscience will make new stirs, and breed new, broils and continually move and unquiet the heart: therefore as it is good to have our judgement informed by the Word, when we see the good that is in us; so it is meet we should make Conscience perswaded of it, so as Conscience may speak for us, and all be made strait. Otherwise, as the Debtour that is indebted to many Creditours, if he agree not with all, or with all save one; that one may come upon him as well as all the rest: so for the poor distressed soul that lies at the mercie of the Lord, and is so deep in arrearages to the Law, that he cannot winde out; if he labour not to still Conscience, and what is else against him, in every point as well as in some, if he leave one undischarged, that one may set his Conscience against him, as well as an hundred.

The

The want of this is the cause why new Suits and new Bills are daily put in against us: onely because Conscience is not pacified, nor all quieted. And now take a poor sinner that hath all his Doubts and Objections answered, come to him, and say, Are all these all your Doubts and Objections? He will say, Yea. And are they all answered? Here he will say, Yea, too. And have you now any thing to say against that which hath been made known unto you? No, not now. But say to him again, Did your Conscience say to you, It is a sin to say you have no grace? Here he demurs, and stops, and says, No; I dare not say so, but I rather say the contrary. And now mark what he says: All the Books are croſt, and all Objections answered, and yet Conscience puts in a new plea, because haply it was not satisfied to the full, and in every parcel of aberration.

And now come to him again, and say, You are sometimes captivated by sin, are you not? And are you

you willing to be at God's free diſ-poſe, and that he ſhould pluck away all your corruptions, as it were ſhac-kles, from you, are you not?

O, ſaith the poor ſinner, I muſt needs yield to that. Then I affirm to thy Soul, that this is a work of true grace. Here (therefore) let Conſcience be fully ſatisfied. But how ſatisfied? Thus: Cancell all ſelf-accuſations, and this will cut all ſcores, and clear the heart, ſcattering all clouds that miſt it. This will caſt out all cavils, and all new Bills againſt us: *For, if our Conſciences condemn us not, then we have bold-neſs towards God.* We muſt then ſtop the mouth of Conſcience; that is, be convinced, and agree, that it is a ſin to ſay, God hath not wrought this work of grace in the heart, when it is ſo clear he hath. For though ſenſe and feeling be (as it ſometimes will be) gone, yet Conſcience remem-bers the day and year when the ſinner had a clear evidence of God's love; and therefore ſaith, Lord thoa know-eſt it, and thou didſt ſay out of thy Word

Word at such a time, that the heart of this poor soul was upright and sincere before thee.

And here it should be with a poor sinner, as with a wise man, when he would make his Lands sure unto him and his posteritie, by Evidences and Writings sealed: he is not content here onely to have his Evidences in his own keeping, but will have them inrolled in Chancerie, such a year and such a day: that if he should lose his Deeds, he might be sure where to finde them. So it should be with the distressed soul; it should not onely be willing to have all objections to the contrary of it answered; but it should further get them recorded in the Court of Conscience, as in Chancerie; that when sense and feeling are lost, yet it may readily go to the high Court of Conscience, and there finde the day and year when God's love was made sure unto it. This for the second Rule.

Rule 3. For the third: Thirdly, we should strive, and that mightily, to have our hearts over-powered with the evi-

dence

dence that Reaſon and Conſcience make good unto us: that ſo we may quietly receive, and calmly welcome it; yea, and yield and ſubject our hearts to the truth of it. But here we all ſtick: and there are three things in the ſoul of a man; three, I ſay, that abet all theſe quarrels and oppoſitions againſt the evidence of the Word in that man. The firſt: for 1. Reaſon objects. 2. The ſecond: then Conſcience accuſeth. And the third: 3. The will of man will not ſubmit. And here we finde by experience, that when a man hath ſtilled Conſcience, and ſilenced all reaſons to the contrary of his peace; yet ſuch is the Iron of a ſtubborn heart, that nothing can bar it; but ſtill it maintains, and will, ſome gain-ſaying, and ſome new quarrels againſt the truth and it ſelf. Beſides, it keeps on foot even that that hath been long ago anſwered, and let down: nay, that a man would think had been buried in a deep grave (as deep as Hell) never to riſe again. Now in this caſe it is with with a poot

ſinner

sinner, as with a man that hath a contentious adversarie. Haply the cause that they two have in hand hath been tried in all Courts of Law, and at last comes to the Chancerie; And there it is concluded against the cavilling Adversarie, as in the other Courts; there all matters are as well stated and ordered as a man would wish, and as an honest man would grant: Yet will not this man, that is so contentious, be so concluded, or so yield, but will to the Law again with a back Suit, and then, and upon that old grudge, stake down all he hath, and sell all to his shirt. His will he will have, whatever it cost him. Nor will he give over, till the Judge doth come to take notice of him, and so to cast out his Cause with himself, whom therefore he commits to Prison, and saith, Sirrah, these matters were (all of them, long ago) answered, and will you trouble us again, not with new matters, but with old quarrels?

Just so it is with the heart even of a gracious man sometimes, and one

one that is humbled in some measure; and could be content to yield to the commanding power of God's Word, and to the witness of his own Conscience; and therefore saith, My condition is better than I thought it was; yet there is an old proud, self-will'd heart still in me; an heart that will not be quieted nor said unto; but still will be quarrelsome, and maintain he old exception. For though all Reasons are well confuted, and Conscience bears witness it is so; and the Ministers, as the Judges under Christ, casts out the Cause: yet (observe it) the poor distressed sinner will keep the old road of objectiug against himself: And though he hath been answered fully, and to every point, not many hours before; yet he keeps old matters still fresh, and out of the Salt, till they yield a soul scent to all that come within the hearing of them. And thus, even when a man would think he should not dare to come in Court with such old cashiered stuff; yet that proud self-will'd heart will be doing

doing still, nor will yield or give over. Have we not just cause then to labour our hearts so far as to get them over-powered with the authoritie of the truth concerning whatsoever God reveals to them for their good? O therefore, poor soul, do not reject the evidence which God makes known, and passeth upon thee for thy sure welfare eternally. Do not, because thou hast not that comfort that thou wouldst, reject all as if thou wouldst have none at all. So then the fault here is not properly because thou canst not, but because thou wilt not receive the promise: and this is that that so wracks and torments thy spirit; this is that which breeds the quarrel so hard to be compounded; and hence it is that when Reason is satisfied, and Conscience convinced, yet the Soul is perplexed still. For put this Question to it, and say unto it; Are you perswaded that the Lord hath done this good, that he will shew all everlasting mercie to your Soul? and it will say No; and that all the

world

world shall not perswade it of that. Ministers are merciful (will such a distempered soul say) and Christians are charitable, and loath to displease too much, or to discourage one in my case, or do to me as I should do to them: but did they know me indeed, they would never think thus of me: certainly I shall never finde it so. What? Have I grace? All the World shall never perswade me to it. Mark what I say: This is meerly thy pride and self-willedness, that will not receive that good which God is willing to give thee. But repent, or this pride of thy pettish heart will cost thee dear, one day; I wish not.

But some will say, How can you make this pride? We are ever complainiug of, and condemning our selves; And can this be pride? *Object.*

Yes, I say, (and mark what I say) it is intolerable pride against the Majestie of Heaven: and this I make good by these two things. For, first, for a man to follow his own conceits and self-willedness against *Answ.*

againſt the truth, the force of reaſon, and the witneſs of the ſervants of God, and his own Conſcience; cannot but be pride.

Secondly, And for a man, becauſe he hath not what he would, to be (therefore) off the hinges ſo, as to throw away all God's kindneſs, and to deny the grace that is given him: and this becauſe he cannot be Conqueror as he deſires; is not this pride? That meaſure of mercie which God hath already ſhewed to thy ſoul, is incomprehenſible, beyond man's reach; and yet becauſe thou canſt not have what thou wouldſt, thou wilt have nothing at all. Juſt as if a man that hath the Law on his ſide, and his Eſtate ſetled on him, ſhould, becauſe his Evidences are not written in great golden Letters, nor in the largeſt Royal Paper, throw all away. This is your caſe: for ſo you, becauſe you have not ſo much of grace, or with ſuch a ſweetneſs as you would, you deny you have any. But have you no humilitie, becauſe none to your minde, or not ſo much,

or

or not in such manner as you require. O pride! and pride in the highest degree!

These things considered, labour to bring your hearts more down in a holy subjection to God's measure and time. And think it your dutie, as well to receive comfort when God offers it upon good terms, as to do any dutie commanded. And know that it is as truly a sin (though of a bigger size) to reject mercie when God offers it, as to kill a man, which God hath forbidden. I say, Not as much: for I know there is odds in the degree. Therefore you (the Saints of God) that have been thus sheltered, and thus possest to become your own enemies; remember (when your hearts begin thus to slide away) to take your hearts unto you, and not to give them the reins at such desperate conclusions against God and Conscience. Deal better with your souls, and say, Good Lord, this is the proud unyielding distemper of this vile heart of mine. For, what would I have? Is not God's Word

clear

clear in this point, and my conscienc
satisfied? Do not the Ministers o
God affirm my state to be good? an
shall I thus dishonour God, and slight
them?

Object. But what saith the poor Soul t
this? Must I eat mine own words
Must I say and unsay? Say I ha
grace, when before I said, I ha
none?

Answ. Yes, and be thankful too to G
that you may say so. Is it not bett
for you to cross your own flesh, th
to cross God's Spirit? Take noti
of this, and fear, lest that proud a
pettish Soul of yours (which now r
fuseth consolation when God off
it) be forced to fare as a man that c
his own flesh, and so to come up
her knees for comfort, and get no
to her dying day. For though G
will save you at last, yet (mean whi
you shall have an Hell upon Earth b
fore this be.

One would have thought it h
been great humilitie in *Peter* to re
to let Christ *wash his feet*; but
was no such matter. Indeed, nothi
les

leſs; therefore Chriſt takes him up roundly for it (which is indeed, the onely way to cure ſuch a diſtemper as this,) *If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part in me.* If you will needs have your own way, and humour your ſelf, and will not be perſwaded; you may go down to Hell in the minde. *Peter* might have pauſed here, and taken breath; but did not; his ſtout ſtomach quickly came down, and he preſently ſaid, Then; *Lord, not onely my feet, but my hands, and head*; and all. It is the humilitie of a good heart, to take what God offers. Moſt Chriſtians think they are humble-hearted, when yet they are ſo far proud, as to give way to this ſullen diſpoſition. Therefore labour to over-maſter this over-ſoaring heart of thine, with the authoritie of the Word of God, and be ſure to receive mercie while God offers it, leſt he draw in, and take away the comfort of his Spirit from thee, and make thee go howling and roaring to thy grave. Though he bring thee to Heaven in the end, yet thou mayſt have Joh. 13. 8,9.

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an uncomfortable Hell before thou comest thither.

Rule 4. So for the third Rule, the last followeth. The last Rule is this: Maintain the good work which thy heart hath submitted unto, and keep it as the best thing in thy house, and (of treasure) the best under Heaven. And then, when thou hast by it obtained certain evidence that thy estate is good; hear nothing against it, but stick fast to it, as to thy life. Regard nothing (what is not in the Word) to the contrary of that evidence of thy salvation that I mean, which thou hast been perswaded of by the Word of truth. And here, if Satan or carnal Reason have any thing to say against thee, let them bring Scripture, and then yield to it in the true sense; but without the Word hear nothing. Look as it is with a man that is at Law for Lands; if he have his Adversarie on the hip, and have gotten some advantage against him, he will keep him there, and hold him to the point. So do thou in a better case. For, if a man will follow e-

very

very wrangling Lawyer at every impertinent quillet or out-leap he must never look for an end of Lawing: and it is the fashion of many Atturneys, rather to breed quarrels, than to kill them in the conception, So in this case, he that will quarrel where he may resolve, shall never have done. And therefore hold to the main point. Deal with Satan as with a subtil Adversarie that is full of wiles and fetches. It is the cunning of the Enemie to lead you aside: and he will have many vagaries (if you be in a good way) to bring you out: But be sure to hold to that truth which you have received from the evidence of the Word and the witness of Conscience. When a man hath gotten some comfort, then the Devil begins to play the Lawyer, in this or the like manner.

How the Soul being tempted may answer Sathn's accusations.

Dost thou not see how weak and poor thou art? how destitute of all *Satan.*

saving grace, and how contrary thou walkest to God?

Sinner. It is true, (saith the Soul) yet it is as true that he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercie.

Satan. But (saith the Devil) dost thou not see that thou art full of pride and weakness, and secretly unwilling to come to duties?

Sinner. It is true, (saith the Soul) I am so, yet I hate and desire to forsake this way, and therefore shall finde mercie; the Word saith so.

Satan. But (saith the Devil) are you of God's Council? Secret things belong to God.

Sinner. Indeed (saith the Soul) I know not what God's secret will is; yet that I know, that the Word saith; which is, *He hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner*, but invites such daily to come unto him.

Satan. But (saith the Devil) many cozen themselves: mercie is as a black Swan, a rare bird, and few obtain it:

it: and why (then) may not you be cozened as well as others?

But (saith the Soul) the Lord will not cozen me, and the Lord knows my heart; and the Word knows what the Lord knows. *Sinner.*

But (saith the Devil) may not you be deceived in the letter of the Word? The Word is true indeed; but how know you that you rightly apply it, and that the Word and your heart suit together? *Satan.*

Why, (saith the Soul) I desire as earnestly to have my sin purged, as I do to have it pardoned. I know my heart by the Word, and to the Word I repair; and the Lord knows that I hate all sin inwardly, and reform it outwardly, to my weak power; and therefore I know I shall finde mercie. Shew me a place of Scripture that saith I do not rightly apply the Word, and I will believe it; but I will not believe thee; for thou art, as thou wast from the beginning, a Liar. Thus hold to the Word, and the Devil will be tired, weary, and leave thee; keep you *Sinner.*

here, for if he catch you wandring after sense and feeling you are gone.
Ps.119.98 The Prophet saith, *Thou through thy Commandments hast made me wiser than mine Enemies, for* they *are ever with me.* Satan is wise by long experience; and the flesh, and carnal reason, and the world, are wise too: but blessed be our God that makes every poor ignorant servant of his, wiser than all these. But how? the Word must ever be in your hands, and the meditation of it in your hearts: it must be always with you: and you must keep it with you daily: for what will make you not to know onely what is amiss, but to get ground against corruption, and whatsoever else may hinder your peace with God and with your selves.

Satan deals in this case with the Soul, as the Enemie in War when
Josh.8.19. *Joshua* defeated the men of *Ai*, he got them out of the Cities; and then they that lay in ambush went and took it, and burnt it with fire. So the Devil doth: Our Castle or City

is the Promiſes, the Word and Ordinances of God: Now if the Devil can but get you out of this Caſtle, he hath you where he would: if you will look after every bird that flies, and liſten after every word of carnal Reaſon and Temptation that comes, you are gone: If he can get you from the ſure Hold of the promiſe, he will entangle you in his ſnare of unbelief, and ſo prevail againſt you.

Little children, if ye abide in God's Commandments, ye abide in God, ſaith the Apoſtle. As if he had ſaid, Children, your Enemies are many, and great, and cunning; therefore keep home, and within the walls of your ſure hope, and then you are well, whatſoever weather is up. It is the faſhion of Parents, if their Children run abroad and catch a knock, to tell them that they are well enough ſerved, you might have kept home when you had warning. So here. 1 Joh. 2. 28.

The iſſue of the point is this: Judge thy ſoul by the Word, and look upon that ſacred Piece in the Glaſs of

it self: And here, let it bear witness for thee: and what the Word of God doth evidence to thee, that do thou maintain, and hear nothing against it. This is the way to receive constant comfort, and the way to go on chearfully in thy Christian course. Let quarrels, troubles, and temptations come, yet keep those within doors, and rest thy self upon the riches of that grace that is in Christ Jesus. Then you may be for ever comforted, and go singing to Heaven, and merrily to your graves, though you meet with never so many temptations and oppositions, crossing your way.

Now follow some means to obtain an interest in the Promises.

It resteth that I shew you some means whereby a man may so improve his time, that at last he may obtain this blessed estate of being merry in the Lord. The means are four. But before I begin with them, you must first know, that we may use

use the means, and yet finde no means under Heaven to do it, except God strike the stroke: You must therefore wait upon God, and the Spirit of God, in the use of the means, for this matter, by believing rightly, to your assurance. For, so the Text saith, *To you it is given to believe*; it must be given, therefore: and faith is the free gift of God. It is God then that must do it; who yet will not do it without us, being reasonable men and women in the power of willing. Again, the Lord affords us means; yet not to use them, and give him the slip. And here it is a good saying; Let the Lord do what he will, and let us do what we should. We must not think, when we have the means, that we can get faith presently: for, as *Paul* saith, *The same power that raised up Jesus from the dead, must make us able to believe*; or else all the Angels in Heaven, and all the Ministers on Earth, and all help that men and means can give us, will do us no good. Now the means are of divers kindes: as, hearing Ephes. 1. 20

and prayer, and Sacraments, which are the Conduits from which God communicates faith. But I let them pass, and fasten upon those which are needful for feeble Christians to the bringing of them into this blessed estate of rightly believing. And these are such as follow.

1. *Means.* First, we must, as much as in us lies, labour to pull away all those carnal outward stays that the soul leans upon, and all other like succours, and whatsoever contentment it is, which a poor sinner doth betake himself to as to his refuge, for relief and help; that when all these are taken from us, we may be forced to go for succour thither, where right succour is to be had. It is a thing natural to us all; even from our first Parents; a desire to have the staff in our own hands, and to be able to supply our selves of all necessaries, without being beholding to others, or to any.

Now therefore the way to make the soul lean upon Christ, is, to pluck away all those deceiving

props,

props. The laſt thing we flie unto, is the promiſe; which if we could finde good any where elſe than in Chriſt, we would never go to him for it. God hears laſt of us; and therefore, here, we ſhould do with our ſelves, as the Enemie doth with a Citie beſieged, when he would make the Inhabitants, or thoſe that keep it, to yield; The way he takes is to famiſh them, to cut off all proviſion, and ſtop all paſſages, ſo as that none can come to relieve them: then they preſently yield themſelves to the mercie of the Aſſailant: ſo it is with our nature; and ſeeing it is ſo that we are ſtill truſting to our own ſtrengths, and relying upon ſome thing of our own; the beſt way were to famiſh the heart by cutting off all the means and comforts whereby the ſame is ſuccoured, and quieted, but not rightly, in Chriſt. For when the heart is thus famiſhed, it will then ſeek out to a Saviour, and there be, becauſe there is no other thing or means otherwiſe to help it.

Matth. 5. 26, 27.

The poor Woman in the Gospel had spent all her Goods upon the Physicians; and if she had had but a little means left, yea, but one Farthing-Token (for any thing I know, or doth appear) she would never have gone to Christ: But when all these failed, then she was forced to seek to Christ, that was ready and willing to do that for her, and more than she desired. Our souls must have something to bear upon; and they cannot subsist without some under-props. Hereupon, therefore, when all our carnal hopes are taken from us, we stay (as we must needs) upon the Promise, because we have nothing else to rest upon. Yet it is not required (though I thus speak) that a man should cast away all outward comforts, such as God affords him for the interim here; O no! but onely this; That (though he have much this way) yet that he labour to get his heart to see and acknowledge the insufficiencie and nothingness of them all, till he have the superlative comfort, Christ, above

bove all; and not to repoſe in them (having them) as ſome do, making them our whole contentment, and ſole reſt: For then they are but lying vanities, and broken ſtaves, which will not onely cozen us, but pierce us too, and that deeply.

And now when the ſoul ſeeth that theſe cannot at all ſuccour it, but lay it in worſe caſe; a man will then be content to have his heart divorced from them. And here it is with the ſoul as it was with *Noah's Dove*, when the Ark began to reſt upon the mountain of *Ararat*. *Noah* then ſent out the Dove: but the Dove *found no reſt for the ſole of her foot*. No queſtion there were many dead carcaſes to ſetle upon; but the Dove found no reſt, till ſhe came to the Ark again. So when a man findes no reſt in any thing the creature affords, and can get no footing for the ſoul there to ſtay it ſelf upon; then it betakes it ſelf to Chriſt the Ark, and goes home to the promiſe, and reſts there, and expects from thence what is needful

for

for it. As (therefore) in the Art of Swimming; he that will swim, must pluck his feet from the bottom, and commit himself to the stream to bear him up: so in this our purpose to Heaven, we must draw our hearts from these vain things below, and these from them; and though we have honour and preferments, yet we must put no confidence in them, but pluck our affections, as it were feet, from them, and learn by our believing to commit our selves wholly to the power of the promise, and thence to receive comfort, and permanent abiding.

Let not the gods of this world, then, as Honour, and Profit, and Pleasures, deceive thee. Did the pride of *Pharaoh*'s heart deliver him? Did the riches of the rich man in Hell save him? Did *Herod*'s applause that he had, do him any good? Did these gods secure them? Nay, have they not left them in the lurch? Therefore let us take our hearts off from these things, and (in comparison to those of our better life) have a base

baſe eſteem of them, and ſee ſo great a vanitie, and emptineſs, and inſufficiencie in them all, that we may be forced to ſeek to Chriſt, and ſay as David, *Help, Lord, for vain is the help of man.* Labour we further to ſee the privy pranks of our own hearts, and to hunt out all thoſe mazes, and turnings and windings of our ſubtil ſouls: for here, it is wonderful to ſee how the ſoul is ready to hang her comforts upon every hedge, and to ſhift and ſhark in every by-corner for them. Now when thou ſeeſt thy heart thus ſeeking comfort in vain helps, call it from them, and them pluck away, and up by the roots, and ſee the emptineſs of them: then will thy heart be fit and ready to make out to Chriſt. And thus for the firſt means.

Secondly, therefore when this is done, there is, in ſome part, ſome way made for the promiſe to come into thy ſoul: and therefore labour thou, in the ſecond place, to have thy heart poſſeſſed throughly, and perſwaded effectually, of the fulneſs of that good

good which is in the promise, and of that satisfactory mercie and freenes of the grace that is in Christ; so that the soul may be established with that full content which is to be had in the riches of the promise. But mark what I say; Let us perswade our hearts first; and not content our selves that we are able to dispute somewhat fully of the excellencie of the promise, and of those riches in it, through the free grace of God in Christ. For, what is it to purpose that the heart knows this, and knowing it to be so fore-stall'd that it can never come to the promise? Therefore leave not thy heart till it come to value the promise by that that the Word speaketh of it in a true account. I say, Leave not thy heart, till thou see the promise of grace most beautiful in thine eye, and that thy heart may get some earnest touching the goodnes of God, and the riches of his grace towards thee by the same. And here bring thy heart to know and see, that the promise is better than all the riches and ho-

honours that thou canst have, or the world can bestow: for so we read *They that* know thee *will trust in thee; for thou, Lord, hast never failed them that seek thee.* If thou knowest, and wilt believe this, this kinde of knowledge and perswasion cannot but breed confidence and resolution, and (consequently) quiet the heart. We dare trust a friend whose faithfulness we have tried; and we rest upon that which we know by the sure Card of experience. The promises of God are (all of them) as true as Gospel. Seek from one end of the Heaven to the other; turn all the Bible over, and see if ever any man leaned on the promise, and the Lord did not perform what he had promised for the good of his soul. *Except thy Law had been my delight* Psa. 119.92 *I should have perished in my troubles,* Psal. 73.26 (saith *David*) *My flesh faileth, and my heart also; but thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* But here lies a great matter, a work of marvellous difficultie and great necessity; and therefore, that thy heart Psal 9.10.

heart may sit down satisfied with the sufficiencie of the promise, I will propound three Rules how the promise may be improved, and conduce to thy singular benefit here and hereafter.

Rule 1. How to improve the promises for our benefit.

For the first of these Rules: Labour daily to present thy soul a greater good in the promise, then thou canst see any where else. It is a mans skill, (and it should be his endeavour) daily to dog his heart, and to look what it is that the heart desires most; and accordingly to present the greatest good unto it. And what may that be? Even that which hath more of contentment in it, than any thing else in the world. And, here, we should deal with our hearts, as a man will with a corrupt Justice, when he would have him to be on his side: there, the onely way is to bribe him: but though this be sinful in this case, yet it is good to bribe (as it were) the corrupt heart with the goodness of the promise; that so the heart may cleave to it, and long after it. Do honours,

nours, or riches, or the applause of men, or any earthly pleasures offer thee content and satisfaction? Then perswade thy heart there is a greater worth in the promise, than can be had in all them. For here is *an exceeding weight of glory*: and he that hath it shall be made a *King*r and shall have that *glory* that *will never fade*. Further, doth thy heart hanker after earthly joy and mirth? Thou shalt finde more joy in the promise, than in the cracking of these thorns. Doth thy heart hanker after riches? Tell thy heart that there are *unsearchable riches in Christ*, and that through him, we have title *to all the Promises of this life*, and a better. We know that he that offers most for the bargain hath it: therefore we should observe the goings out of our hearts, and what offers are made to give them the best content, and with such to present them. This the promise doth; and this with a greater good in God, than in all things in the world beside. Therefore, *O the heighth and depth*

and

and length, and breadth of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge!

The consideration of so much, should not onely work a longing after Christ, and the promise; but fill our faces with shame and confusion, that ever we should set so light by such riches of mercie, and walk unworthy of so great salvation. Could we comprehend the unmeasurable dimensions of God's love and goodness revealed in his Word: O how would our hearts be inflamed towards him? When the sinner thinks thus with himself; I that have done all that I could against so good a God, that my heart even bleeds to think of it, there was no name under Heaven that I tore in pieces more, or so much as God's Name; his *wounds*, and *life*, and *heart-blood* I have rent and torn a thousand times. Nay, there was no command in the world that my soul so much despised, as the command of the Lord Jesus. There was no spirit that ever spake to me, which I so much resisted as the Spirit of the Almightie.

O

O how many ſweet motions hath the Lord let into my ſoul, thereby to force me from my courſes ſo baſe, and practiſes ſo ſinful! By how many mercies hath he allured me; by how many gracious promiſes hath he invited me; by how much of his goodneſs provoked me to forſake my ſins, and to turn unto him! But I have flown in the face of his *Miniſters*, and *bleſſed Spirit*, and rejected all terms of reconciliation. If I had lien in a dungeon, and been plagued with torments all my life-time; yea, though I could have had another world full of miſerie to live in, I ſhould count it infinite mercie, ſo the Lord would paſs by my ſinful miſcariages, and pardon theſe inward inſurrections.

But that God ſhould ſend his dearest Son to love me, and that ſo incomparably and ſo unconceivably, as that I could not poſſibly hate him ſo much, as he loved and affected me; that I could not ſo exceed in unkindneſs towards him, as he hath exceeded in tender kindneſs towards me;

What

What a love is this? What unkindneſs for ſo great a love? Were it not righteous with God, never to ſpeak comfort more to my ſoul, that have ſo lightly eſteemed his promiſe, and ſweet Word of comfort? Had it not been juſt with him now to ſit at the catch, and to take all this (as he well might) for an advantage againſt me? Was it not juſt that I, which lived in ſin, ſhould have periſhed in my ſins? and as juſt that I who have ſo much loved corruption, ſhould have reaped the bitter Fruit of it, long ere this? But that the Lord ſhould finde an Enemy, and not ſlay him; nay, that he ſhould give his beloved *Son* out of his own boſome to ſave him, is a Love not to be expreſſed. O the *height* of this mercie beyond all deſire or thought! O the *breadth* of this mercie, a breadth without any bounds! O the *length* of this mercie, a length beyond all times! O the *depth* of this mercie, a profunditie beyond all expreſſion!

Labour here (therefore) to have ac-

acceſs to the promiſe, and to bring thy ſoul unto it. Here, ſpeak a good word for it, and ſay; Stand off profits, and pleaſures, and preferments; room for the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Thus ſpeak, and ſet a peerleſs moſt excellent price upon the promiſe: and be ſure of this (for it is a ſure Rule) whatſoevee the ſoul doth account as beſt, that it will chuſe, and leave all others for it. Therefore if the ſoul could once out-bid the world, and out-ſhoot the Devil in his own bowe, and put by all thoſe things which the Devil caſts as rubbs in its way of coming to the promiſe; this labour would be a work of great gain, and uſher in the promiſe it ſelf. For example, as thus, when thou ſeeſt thy heart look after friends; let thoſe friends uſher the way to think on the infinite love and favour of God in Chriſt, that friend, as he calls himſelf: and when thy heart would hunt after wealth, let this uſher a way to the promiſe, and ſay, If the heart finde ſuch content in riches, what ſhall it finde in the riches of God's

God's grace in Christ! And thus present a greater good from the promise than any, from any thing else; and thou dealest safely, and well for thy self. This for the first Rule.

2. The second Rule is; Labour to bring thy heart to this; That all the things in the world without the promise are nothing: and that if thou hadst all that the earth could afford, and not it, thou hadst gotten but the winde, or that which will rather be a curse unto thee than a blessing: For, *Faith is the substance of things hoped for.* It gives a kinde of being or subsistence to all. So that there is no subsistence in honour or riches, if they subsist not by Faith; and without Faith they are clogs and snares to us, no helpers; except Faith give them their denomination and a blessing therewith, they are poor and empty things. Our prayers, if they want Faith in the promise, are prayers of no substance, words, and nothing else. On the other side, the most broken and chattering prayers of a poor soul, when

Heb. 11. 1.

a poor creature can ſcarce utter five words with any ſenſe; yet theſe (how weak ſoever) mingled with Faith, are a very powerful prayer. So all your hearing, and my preaching, hangs upon Faith; otherwiſe they are but loſt labour, wanting that that gives a kinde of being to whatſoever I ſpeak, or you hear. This for the ſecond Rule.

The third Rule, in this ſecond of the means, is this: Labour to acquaint thy heart with that good, which the promiſe promiſeth: and this, before carnal Reaſon comes and poſſeſſes thy heart. Remember here that the promiſe is moſt ſure, and will come when it ſhall be moſt ſeaſonable, and beſt for thee, and when God ſees it moſt fit; for then, we ſhall moſt certainly have it. *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may receive comfort and mercy in time of need.* Not when we ſee it fit, but when God ſees it fit and profitable. But this is that which carries away many: Sometimes they are a little affected with the excellencie of the riches of God's

3.

Heb. 4. 16.

God's grace in Christ, and seeing what great things the Lord hath done for their soul, they say; O that I were such a one; and O that I might die the death of the righteous! But when it comes so to pass that they have not what presently they expect, then they cast away their hope; and then the good promise of GOD being out of request, the Devil presently steps in and wonderfully prevails with them: They say not with the Prophet: *When the Fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall the fruit be on the Vines; when the labour of the Olive shall fail and yield no fruit, then will I rejoyce in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation.* But where no blossoms are, nor fruits appear, there all joy goes to ground. We do not consider that comfort from the promise, and from the Lord Jesus, is then most seasonable, when we have most need, and (consequently) may receive most good by it: for then may we be sure to have the promise so to surprize our heart, that it shall be possessed

Hab. 3. 17.

and

and made happy with the All-sufficiency of God. But we go not so far. This for the second Rule.

In the third place, look for all the good which thou needest and canst desire from that sufficiencie which is in the promise; and do not think of thy self to add any good unto it, but go to it for all thy good: For, *there* are all the Cords of Mercie that must draw thee; and *there* is that All-sufficiencie that can supply thee; and therefore look for all from thence, but think to bring nothing thither; nothing (I say) that can be of power to enable thee to a power of believing. 3. *Means.*

And here, it is weak Plea for a man to say, I dare not look to the promise, I cannot believe it; for if I could (and O that I could) then I might expect some good fruit from it. *Object.*

To answer this, Thou shalt never believe upon these terms; for, thou must not first have Faith, and then go to the promise, but must first go to the promise for the power *Answ.*

of that faith; from it thou must receive power to believe. And therefore say with the Prophet, "*O Lord, remember thy word to thy servant wherein thou hast caused me to trust.* When men are enlarged in love to man, and make fair weather of promises unto him; this perswades him to trust unto them, and to relie upon them for good to come; therefore he saith, I durst never so much as have thought of it, much less expected it, if you had not promised so much.

Psal.119. 49.

And even so here, the promise of God (made to the Soul) makes the Soul to rest upon what is promised.

To expect faith without a promise, is as if a man should expect a Crop of Corn without Seed; for the Promise is the immortal Seed of God's Word, whereby the Spirit breeds this faith in the hearts of all that are his. So Christ, "*The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear it shall live:* It is spoken of raising a dead man from

Joh.5.25.

from the grave of sin. First, there is the voice of Christ to the Soul, before there can be an Eccho again of that Soul to Christ; and so the power of the promise must first come to the Soul, and we must first hear the voice of God in the promise, before we can return an Eccho back again to the Lord: The Lord must say, *Come to me*, before the Soul can say, *I come, Lord.* Therefore when thou seest much deadness, and dead unfitness of heart in thee to the promise, do not thou then leave, and give off, and say, Thus I am, and so it is with me, and so an end; but go to the promise and say, Whatsoever frailties I finde in my self, yet I will look to the Lord, and to his promise; for if I want faith, the promise must settle me, and I must not bring faith to the promise, but receive faith from it to believe; and therefore I will wait upon God till he please to work it. Thus for the third Rule.

4. *Means.*

And now, in the last place, and lastly, Labour to submit to the most equal condition of the promise, not

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4. *Means.*

making more conditions there than God hath made. Now the promise requires no more of a man, but that he come and lay hold of mercie; therefore do thou require no more. There is enough in the promise to do thee good; therefore do thou expect all good from it, and be content there to take of God whatsoever he hath therein offered to thy Faith. *Buy without money,* saith the Prophet: This is the condition that God offers mercie upon; Buy Wine and Milk, that is, Grace and Salvation, *without Money,* that is, without any sufficiencie of your own. If a man should go running up and down to borrow money before he comes to buy, he may famish before he can come: So the Lord offering Christ, mercie and salvation, without our cost, and saying, Come take it without money; and yet we will run up and down to borrow money of our Prayers and other Duties also, and from our Prayer against corruption, we may be starved spiritually before we can buy at that hand. If we

Isai. 55. 12.

go

go this way to work, we may quickly loſe our labour, and our ſelves. And therefore make God's commodities no dearer than God himſelf makes them. Many a poor ſoul, not remembring this, is kept from coming to the promiſe; For, O, ſaith one; If I were able to maſter my ſins and diſtempers as ſuch a one can do, then I might with boldneſs believe. But this is to bring money: but art thou not content to have Chriſt of free-coſt, ſo as he may have thee, and rule in thee, and ſupply what is wanting to thee, and open thy ſores, and heal thy corruptions? Then why goeſt thou not to the promiſe with an empty heart, that the Lord may ſupply thee, and maſter all thy riſings, and make thee a clean heart? But that muſt come afterwards, as the Lord ſaith, *When I paſſed by thee, and ſaw thee in thy bloud, and behold, the time was as the time of love; and I ſpread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedneſs; yea, I entred into a Covenant with thee, and thou becameſt mine,* (that is, thou waſt

content that God should marry thee in all thy raggs) *then I washed thee with water, yea, I throughly washed away thy bloud from thee, and anointed thee with oyl; I cloathed thee also with broidered work.* Here we see, that Christ first marrieth the Church to himself, and then gives grace, and passeth over his Estate to his Spouse: And now, were it not a wonderful great follie, if some great King should make love to a poor Milk-maid, and she should put it off, and refuse the Match till she were a Queen, where if she will match with the King, she may be sure to be made a Queen presently. But this comes after, and not before the Mariage. So we must not look for sanctification the first day, nor till we come to the Lord in our Christian Vocation. For this is all the Lord requires of us, namely, to see our sins, to be weary of them, to be content that the Lord Jesus shall reveal unto us what is amiss, and seal a pardon for it, and take it away; and (further) give us his grace to take down the old

old building, and to set up a new one in us after his image: For then the Lord will bring us to himself; and into the wedding-chamber; and then, through his great mercie, all our corruption shall fall to the ground. And when the Lord hath brought thy unfaithful heart to believe; then labour to husband this grace well, and to improve it for thy best good, and live by it: It is a marvellous great shame to see those that are born to fair means, I mean the poor Saints of God, that have a right and title to grace and Christ, yet live at such an under-rate: I would have thee live above the world, though thou hast not a coat to cover thee, nor a house to put thy head in; yet if thou hast faith, thou art a rich man; therefore husband thy estate well. It's a shame to see some live, and husband not that estate they have; they live as if they had it not, so full of want, full of care, so full of pride, so weak, and unable to master their sins, whereas the fault is not in the power of Faith, nor the Promise, nor in

the Lord; for God doth not grudge his people of comfort, but would have his people live chearfully, and have strong consolations and mighty assurances of his love; and therefore the Text saith, *Rejoyce in the Lord always, and again, I say, Rejoyce.* And so, *Heb.*6.18. *God hath sworn that by two immutable things, wherein it's impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolations.* Nay, the Lord rejoyceth in the prosperitie of his servants; and therefore hath richly provided for you, that you may rejoyce; and in not so doing, we offer a great deal of wrong to the Lord, and his promises, and bring an ill report upon that grace and mercie of his: And we hereby also open the mouths of the wicked, and make them say, O, these precise people talk of quiet and contentment, and *joy in the Holy Ghost!* There is great talking of these things, but we could never see it yet. O brethren, it's a great shame; are the riches and revenues of Faith so great, that a Christian may live like a man all his days?

Let

Let all the Drunkards and malicious wretches against God laugh and be merry; yet they cannot see one of those days that a poor Saint can; yea though he lay in prison all his life long, *Matth.*17.20. *If a man had but faith as a grain of Mustard-seed, and shall say to this Mountain, Go hence, it shall be done.* Whether this be spoken of justifying faith, or no, I will not now dispute; but this I am sure of, *Resist the Devil, and he will flie from you*; and you may trample under all your lusts and corruptions: This is the life of Faith, and this life we may live, this life we ought to live. If a Tradesman have a fair stock, and quick returns, if he goes down the winde, and begin to decline and decay; every man will say, He was left marvellous well, but either he knew not how to use it, wanting skill; or else attended not on it, wanting care: Another man would have lived bravely upon half of that means which he had: So there is never a poor Christian, which trades in a Christian course, but he

hath a fair Estate, and may live like a Man. One promise is enough to make a man live comfortably all his days, though he were in never so much want: But if he be cast behinde hand, and goes down the winde with comfort and joy; and sinks because of his pride, and distempers, and vexation: the fault is not in the Estate, for the Lord left him very well; he had a Childe's portion, had he had an heart to fear God, and love him; as *David* saith, *O be merciful unto me, as thou useſt to do unto thoſe that love and fear thy Name:* The fault was not in the promises, that they could not, nor in his faith that it would not help him: but he let the promises lie by; they came into the Table, but he never cast them up, nor husbanded them aright: He had a world of consolations, that would have given a man libertie in Prison, honour in shame and disgrace, and comfort in time of distress; but he did not husband them: and therefore he advised to do as the Tradesman doth; he will not spend

of

of his ſtock, but live of his trading; or I wou'd have every Chriſtian live of his faith. Whatever ſtrength thou needeſt, fetch it from grace in Chriſt; and whatever comfort thou wanteſt, fetch it from Chriſt; but live by faith, and make a good living of it too; and then thou haſt improved the promiſe aright: bring but an empty believing heart with thee, and the Oyl will never fail, and the Meal in the Barrel will never decay, but continually ſupply thee, as it did that poor Widow.

Object. But how ſhall a man be trained, that he get this skill of *living by faith?* Every man hath his ſhifts and tricks, and lives by his own devices; and the Devil hath enough of them in the world that live this Life; but the beſt Life of all is little look'd after..

Now, for an Anſwer, know thus much; That there are three particulars for the training up of the heart to learn the skill of *living by faith.*

1. Firſt, we muſt labour to get matter for our faith to work upon.

2. We

2. We must labour to fit faith for the work.

3. We must labour to order our faith aright in the work.

First, we must provide matter for our faith to work upon: For this we see ordinarily, if a workman want matter to w rk upon, either a Carpenter or the like, he must needs cease his work, and he can go no further. And if a man's work fails, how can he provide for his familie? This is the complaint of poor people now adays, that they have no work; so it is in a Christian's course; many poor Christians that are newly set up, and are not aforehand in the world, they want even matter for their faith; I mean, some are ignorant and cannot read, and some have not means of a preaching Ministrie; others have but small parts and cannot hear, and little do they retain of what they do hear. The promises of God not understood, nor remembered, nor rightly applied, they live marvellously poor, when they might live more comfortably in the world.

Now

Now the matter of our faith is the whole Word of God: as it is with the Bee in gathering Honey: as the Spider gathers Poyson out of every Flower; so the Bee gathers Honey out of the same Flower; and out of the sweetest Flower she sucks the most Honey. O the Word of God, how full of sweet Flowers is it! There is the sharpest terrours, and the fearfullest plagues too: A gracious heart will gather sweetness out of both these. But above all, the sweet of the promises of the Gospel, the sap and sweet therein, and the Bloud of the Lord Jesus Christ that is communicated thereby. O, the faithful Soul sucks most there. Now that we may provide matter for our faith, observe these Rules, which are commonly observed in all provisions.

First, They provide and lay in, in season, timely, as soon as they can: this is the practice of him that would husband his Estate wisely: his care is to buy at the best hand: So I would have a good Christian to store

ſtore up all the promiſes of God, in all the good Word of God ſeaſonably; I mean when all thy parts and abilities are ſtrong, and nature is able to fight it out; and while the fair-day of God's favour laſteth, and while the Word and Sacraments are diſpenſed; this is the beſt time to lay in ſpiritual proviſions, that we may not want them when we have uſe of them. It is a marvellous ſtrange and prepoſterous courſe, when a man is weak, his eyes dim, and his heart and ſtrength faileth, and even ready to give up the ghoſt, then to lay in grace and proviſion of mercie: and then for him who hath hated the Miniſters, and loathed the means of grace, and abuſed the patience and long-ſuffering of God: O then, to have a Miniſter come to him, and have a promiſe in the day of perſecution; then for a man to bethink himſelf of the promiſe and comforts of the Goſpel; when a man ſhould ſpend on the promiſes, then to be getting of them; this is ill Husbandrie: The better way is this, to be buying and getting

getting in at every turn: and this is the reaſon why our Saviour ſaith, *O if thou hadſt known, in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace!* While the Word, and thy Life, and the Sabbaths, and the Ordinances laſt; this is thy day; we know not how ſoon the Lord may take all from us. O the eſtate of the poor *Palatinates*, if it be true we hear of them, they have loſt all the means of Grace, and they have Idolatrie now amongſt them, and their Enemies force them to go to Maſs againſt their Conſciences; and they cannot ſee a good Miniſter, nor a good Chriſtian, but they weep, to conſider the times they once had: Therefore let's labour to be wiſe in the Lord, now while the Fair is; and conſider how God deals with his Children: *Pſalm* 48. 9. *We have thought of thy Name, O Lord, in the midſt of the Temple.* It is ſpoken there of the goodneſs of God towards *Sion:* A cup of poyſon, and a ſtone of ſtumbling: when he had ſpoken of all the Bulwarks that God had

had made, and all the goodness and mercie he had shewed to his people, and the malice and wrath of his Enemies: He saith, This God is our God, even for ever: as if he had said, The Lord did provide for his people in *Egypt*, and overthrew proud *Pharaoh* that set himself against God; and this is our God. When thou art in the Wilderness, this God is thy God; when thou art in persecution, this God is thy God, and the God of all: thus he stores up while the season lasts.

2. Note this, as thou must observe what God doth to others, so labour to treasure up thy own experiences, 1 *Tim.*4.18. He hath delivered us, and he doth and will deliver us, saith the Apostle: and the Prophet *David* saith, *I remember thy judgement of old.* O, well fare a good old store! I remember, saith he, how thou didst rebuke *Amalek*, and overthrow *Nimrod*, and *Nebuchadnezzar*, and *Achitophel.* O it's admirable to consider these things! I received comfort, saith he; God will overthrow

throw every Enemie, and this is ſtore for thy faith to work upon, *Pſal.*89. 49. *Where are thy former mercies?* *David* is aforehand with God now; he is not come to buy food juſt at the time of famine, but it's laid up beforehand: Lay in abundantly of all the promiſes of all kindes, you had better leave than lack; and it's the wiſdom of a man to have ſomewhat to ſpare, and to have an overplus aforehand, that a man may not live feebly, and poorly, and be at his wits end every turn, and knows not which way to ſhift for himſelf, and have no bread in his houſe; I mean, no proviſion of promiſes by him: *Iſaiah* 42.23. *Who is wiſe, let him hear for after times*; As if he had ſaid, You muſt not onely lay in promiſes for the preſent, but ſtore them for afterwards; as the Chapman ſaith, I ſhall want this at ſuch a time; and ſo the Husbandman ſaith, I ſhall have occaſion for this or that at ſuch a time, and ſo get it aforehand. O that God would give us theſe hearts! it is good, as we may ſo ſay, to keep

promiſe

promises in pickle, that we may spend them at leasure. *In the days of famine*, saith the Prophet, *thou shalt have enough*. These special promises will be good meat in *Lent*, when haply thou shalt sit under a hollow Tree, and creep among the Bushes; then three or four of these promises will give a man a good meal of comfort; therefore stop them up, they will do you no harm: and when you are driven from house and home, and friends, and all, these will exceedingly refresh. O how sweetly are they scattered up and down in the world, according to the Saints several necessities and occasions! Bring this precious provision home, leleave it not in the Market: it's a follie to say, I have good provision, but it is not here, *Let the Word of God dwell plenteously in you and richly in all wisdom*. Observe, it must be plentie, not scant; it must dwell in you, that you may but step aside and have it; there is the matter for your faith to work on. So also in the next place, we are to fit faith

for the service, that it may succeed with more comfort and better speed. Though a man be a believer, yet there is a great deal of dulness and bluntness comes upon this grace, though he have it: *Luke* 24. 25. See how our Saviour chides his Disciples, *O fools, slow and dull of heart to believe, &c.* So we ought to whet our faith, that it may line and square the promises (as it is in the *Hebrew*) that it may pierce through the veil of all the riches of the freeness of God's grace, and so bring comfort to us: It's with the hand of faith, as it is with the hand of the bodie; if it be nummed, stiff, or frozen, a man must rub it or warm it before he can hold any thing; so it is with the hand of faith, for faith is the hand of the soul, it takes hold of that mercie which God hath provided for us in Christ Jesus. Now faith is sometimes nummed, and stiff through careleſness and looſness; therefore it's not enough for a man to have faith, but he must supple and oyl the sinews of faith, that he may more freely

freely take hold of the promises of life, and receive comfort from thence; and that this may be done, we must first maintain the evidence of Faith once gotten; without question undeniable, this grace of Faith once gotten, is to be maintained. Mark it, I speak not of those that have not Faith; it is in vain to bid a man live by Faith who hath none; but it's for those in whose heart God hath been pleased to work this blessed grace: This must be the care of those that have gotten Faith: he must know the nature of Faith in general, and of his Faith in particular, whether it be of that Faith which *Peter* speaks of; for there is a great deal of Copper-Faith in the World. As, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and the like. Now when thou hast gained evidence that thou hast Faith, then fill it up, and keep it by thee, and labour to make the demonstration of it so plain to thy soul, that it may undeniable. What a great follie is it for a man to question, when he should

ſe it? The work muſt needs be much hindred, though he have never ſo much faith, when he begins to ravil with it, and to queſtion whether it be good or no: It's a proverbial ſpeech, He that doubts of his way miſſeth his way; for while he is doubting, he goes no way in conſuſion; ſo he that queſtions whether he hath Faith or no, gets little good at preſent by it: tell a poor ſinner of living by Faith, and he ſaith, it's good news if he had it: 'Tis poor comfort to bid a man go warm him when he hath no fire; ſo it's poor comfort to bid a man live by that which he never had; quarrelling and doubting when a man hath it, hinders the uſe and benefit of Faith: Here is a man that is quarrelling about it, when he ſhould live on it: When the Diſciples ſaw Jeſus walking on the Seas, they thought it was a Spirit, but Jeſus ſaid unto them, *Be of good comfort, it is I:* Now when Peter knew it was Chriſt, being ſomewhat too ventrous; he ſaid, *If it be thou, Lord, bid me come unto thee*

thee on the water; and Christ said, *Come*; and *Peter* going, the water began to be boistrous, his heart began to sink, *&c.* and Christ said unto him, *O thou of little faith, why dost thou doubt?* as if he had said, It's now no time of doubting, but a time of believing: The Lord bid him come, and he had ground enough to come, and strength of Faith to come; but when he saw the Waves great and troublesome, instead of believing, he fell a questioning and quarrelling with the promise: As it is with a foul rusty Musket, shoot such a one off, and it will recoil. When Faith grows rusty with doubting, we sit down dismay'd and unsetled; the very questioning and quarrelling against the work of Faith, many times, doth as much disable a man to put forth the power of Faith, as if he had no Faith at all.

Secondly, when thou hast maintained the clearness of the work of grace before gained, then labour to bring thy heart to marvellous stilness and calmness from time to time

Stayed-

Stayedneſs and ſtilneſs of the Soul, frames the heart to hold the ſhield ſteadily, and bear off the blow comfortably when it comes; thoſe boiſtrous affections, thoſe crowds and troops of troubleſome imaginations, as fear and jealouſies; theſe unrank the frame of the Soul, that it is not at the command of Faith; as it is in an Armie, when Ranks and Files are broken, they are at a Rout, be the Commander never ſo skilful, he cannot in that condition march on: So though we had never ſo victorious a Faith, yet if the Soul were hurled up and down with thoſe boiſtrous diſtempers, the Soul could not command Faith. When it was told the Diſciples, *Luke* 24. 41. that Chriſt was riſen from the dead, and had manifeſted himſelf to them; the Text ſaith, *They believed not and wondered:* They would not believe for a while, and it was through the violence of their joy; which made them they had no leaſure to believe. As 'tis true of moderate affection, ſo it's true of ſtrong fear, and care, and diſtempers

stempers, because these hurry the soul violently, and transport it so, that he cannot believe: As it is in a Road, the Traveller is fitted to go his Journey, but he is hindered, because the Crowd is so great and strong, that they cross him, and oppose him, and are ready to carry him another way, against his will; just so it is with a soul thus troubled with tumultuous thoughts, especially Melancholly, and those other enemies of the soul, as vain imaginations, sinful fears, sinful sorrow, distempered thoughts and cares; that though the heart is willing and able to believe, yet those stirrings of boisterous affections, they cross Faith in the way, and bear it down: there *David* chides his heart in *Psalm* 43.5. Even rocks it asleep, and would bring it quiet, saying, *Why art thou so disquieted, O my Soul, why art thou disquieted within me?* There are three things fit our purpose in this Text.

1. That a tumultuous distemper of heart makes a man lie flat upon his back, and sink into a swound.

2. I

2. It hinders the work of faith; mark what follows: *Still trust in God*: As if he had said, Leave those distempers of heart, and rest upon the freeness of Gods grace.

3. *David* yet looks up to God for mercy: *For he is yet my God.* The virtue of this Rule we find by experience; especially in melancholly persons, when they have swarms of thoughts buzzing in their minds; sometimes restless fears, that do chase their hearts, as the hound does the Deer in the Forest; and after this comes another affection, and after that another; and so at last they come all together: Sometimes the horrour of a mans conscience makes hue and cry after him, and makes him say, Oh, how my heart smites me! me-thought I saw Hell gaping for me, and the Devil even standing at my Elbow, ready to carry me down to everlasting destruction: this makes his soul to have such an amazement and gastliness of spirit, that he cannot reach the promise of God: Well, take the Lords advice

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by the Prophet; *Fear not*, but *stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord:* that is, lay aside those restless imaginations, and those crowds of foolish conceits; stand still, and be quiet, and with the eye of faith behold the salvation of God.

A third Rule. How faith may be fitted for the work, take notice of this. In the want of any means, do not *first* seek for them; and in the presence of any means God affords, look not *first* to them for succour and supply, but *first* go to the promise, that it may supply what you need, and that the promise may bless what means you have. It is an uncomfortable and disorderly course, for a man barely, and firstly, to look at those things which are within the compass of Sense, and so range up and down in the use of the means, when the promise and Christ are the last thought of in our hearts. As for instance: In a time of poverty, how doth the soul unfit it self for the promise? When a man sees his estate low, and he is like to come to mi-

sery,

sery, he saith, I have some good friends that will not see me want, I have so much means left yet, and I have my health and strength, and I hope to get a poor living. Not one word all this while of a promise: But what say you to this? If death take away all thy friends, sickness take away thy health and strength, fire or thieves take away all thy goods, whether wilt thou now go? When then, at a dead lift, as we commonly say, he is fain to go to that mercy which *endureth for ever.* Oh friend, are you there now? Why came you not thither at first? Well, since thou art come, reason thus: I am like to be poor, and my friends may die, and thieves may rob me of all my goods: but the mercy of the Lord endureth for ever. So a Minister, that is faithful, desires to preach fruitfully, and to the benefit of the Congregation; and then we catch at the helps that are near at hand, and we go to our Books and Studies, our wits and pains, and think these will do the deed. We do well

in all this; but the fault is in the order of doing them. Haply God knocks off mans wheels, and a man is not able to come to the bottome of the point; and if he be able to compass the truth in some measure, yet God blasts all he doth, and there is no good comes to the souls of his people; at last he is fain to go to the promise; and then the poor Minister saith, Lord, thou hast said thou wilt be with thy faithful Ministers *to the end of the World*: Little strength there is in us; but be thou with us, Lord: now the work goes on again. The Tradesman is honest and painful, and he hopes to compass a good estate by his Calling; his stock is good and great, and his skill is sufficient, and his penyworth shall be as reasonable as any others, and his acquaintance are many: Then God blasts all these, and then he comes to the promise, as in *Psalm* 1. 3. *Whatsoever the righteous doth it shall prosper.* Hold here now, and say, I expect all from the promise, mercy and succour from the promise,

miſe. This was the courſe that *Jacob* took, *Gen.* 32. 9. firſt he wreſtled with God and overcame him; then he wreſtled with his brother *Eſau*, and ſaid, *O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Iſaac*, which ſaidſt unto me, *Return into thine own Country, and I will do thee good; I am not worthy of the leaſt of all thy mercies: Lord, deliver me from the hand of my Brother Eſau, for I fear him.* Thus he wreſtled with the Lord by virtue of a promiſe, overcame him, and then overcame his brother *Eſau*, Hebrews the 13. 4. 5. *Marriage is honourable among all men, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.* But how will you have help againſt this covetouſneſs? A man would have ſaid thus: You have got a good portion, and but little charge, and many friends: but this courſe God takes: for he ſaith, *I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee.* And thus when I have chaſed away Doubting, then faith is ready, and the Shield is ſcoured.

Now for the ordering of faith in the work, there are two things to be attended to.

1. How the soul should get to the promises.

2. How the soul should take, receive and improve this sufficiency and excellency that is in God.

1. How the soul should get to the promise: You see all is ready, the way open, and faith is fitted. There are three Rules to be observed, how the soul may get to the promise.

1. Throw off all power and ability in thy self. *Nevertheless*, saith the Apostle, *I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:* It is not I that live by any power of my self, but Christ liveth in me. It was Christs quickning, reviving, and enabling, though he had faith. I *know*, saith the Prophet, *Jer.* 10. 23. *that the way of man is not in himself, neither is it in man to direct his own steps.* So do thou say, if ever thou wouldst have thy heart fitted to go to the promise. Say, It is not here, Lord, it is not in this vain mind; it is not in the pow-

er

er of this dead heart, or any paſſage that ever I received, whereby I am able to believe in thee. I mean the principle of life is not here, the root of faith is in the promiſe, and from thence it comes into the ſoul. As it is with a Mariner, when the Ship is upon the ground in the ebbe and low water, he doth not expect to tug his Ship to the ſhore by any power of himſelf: So, It is not in my wiſdom that can direct me, and it is not in my weapon that can defend; it is not this humility that can bring my ſoul down: It is not here, it is not I, Lord, that can reſt or go to a promiſe; even all our abilities are at a low ebbe. All that we are, or can do, is to empty our ſelves, and fit our ſelves, and get up the main maſt; that is, let the ſoul be ready for a promiſe, and by virtue of that he carried heaven-ward and Chriſt-ward. Take notice of this, in your own ſouls, that the heart would begin at home; If a temptation come, the heart of it ſelf would overcome it; and if a duty to be done, the heart

of it self would perform it: and if opposition come, the heart of it self would resist it. O remember that a man offers an injury against Reason, Sense and Religion, and all. Now thy faith begins to wrestle with him and his dealing; and conscience checks, and thou wilt tear thy own heart out of thy own bosom. Brethren, this will not do it: when a ship of an hundred Tun is upon ground, the Mariners may pull and ring their hearts out, ere they make her go. Oh go then and say, It is not I that can be patient, and put up a wrong, be quiet, expect it not from hence. Let the heart lie still, till the wind and tide, and promise come, and that will carry thee.

The Second Rule, Bring the promise home to thy heart, that the promise may bring thy heart to it: and thus I would have you reason: The Lord Jesus Christ, by the power of his Spirit, is in the promise undeniably, and undoubtedly, and unspeakably accompanying, in his manner, as he shall see fit. This I say

I say, That the Almighty power of Christ doth really and continually accompany the promise for the good of his: Hence it is called, *The spirit of promise*; for there is an Almighty creating work goes along with the promise. And I reason thus; that Word that discerns the thoughts of the hearts of men, that Word must needs have the Almighty Work of Gods Spirit accompanying of it: so far as God hath promised it; not when thou haply think'st it fit, but when God sees it fit. He doth it as a voluntary workman, therefore thou considerest that there is an Almighty power, and a fulness in the promise. Then lay that promise upon thy own heart, and conclude it, and look for virtue from thence, to draw thy soul to it again.

I have several passages to express this more fully. *Jacob* would not believe that *Joseph* was alive; or if he were alive, he had but little means, and was poor, *Gen* 45. 26, 27, 28, 29. *But when he saw the chariots that Joseph had sent him, then*

he believed and said, I have enough; Joseph my Son liveth. The Chariots sent from *Joseph* to *Jacob*, brought *Jacob* to *Joseph*. So every believing soul is poor and feeble, and disabled to go to God, and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ: therefore look thou unto the Chariots of *Israel* first, and that will convey thee to the promise: As it is with the Miller; first he prepares the Mill fitly, and orders all the occasions thereof; and when the stones are fit, and laid to go, yet it will not till the sluce be pulled up, and the water run that drives the Mill: So the soul is humbled, and lies level with the Lord and his Truth, and is content to yield to his conditions; but now the soul of it self, in it self, cannot go, it hath not the principle of going; but let down the sluce of the promise, and let that come to thy heart, and it will bring thy soul home to the Lord; as *Luk.* 19. 9. *This day salvation is come to thy house:* Not to the walls of thy house, but to men that are in thy house. They did not come to salvation; But sal-

ſalvation came to them. The Lord ſent ſalvation to ſalute the houſe of little *Zacheus*.

The third Rule. When the promiſe is thus come home to thee, and thou ſeeſt the ſufficiency and authority of it, then all thou haſt to do is this; In the ſtream of that promiſe be carried home to the promiſe. The Prodigal, *Luk.* 15. is ſaid to be like a *loſt ſheep.* (Mark this, for it concerns you, poor creatures.) The poor ſheep is wandering up and down, now in the mouth of the Lyon, and then in the bryers, and ſometimes in the pit. The Text ſaith, *He leaveth ninety nine to ſeek that.* That is, in compariſon of what care he expreſſeth to the loſt ſheep; he leaveth a man regenerate not careleſly, but he will not expreſs ſo great love as to a poor loſt man: And though thou canſt not find the way to heaven, yet he will find it thee; lie thou upon the ſhoulders of Chriſt. When thou findeſt thy heart feeble and weak, and thy ſelf unable to believe, then the Lord Jeſus Chriſt brings the Spirit

Spirit of grace, and that comes to ſeek; and Jeſus Chriſt lays that ſoul of thine upon his ſhoulders, that is, upon the riches of the freeneſs of his grace: Therefore let thy heart be tranſported by the power of that grace, and by the virtue of that mercy that God hath made known to thee for thy everlaſting good. When the Chariots are come, get up into them. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt is gone up to heaven, and hath ſent theſe Chariots for thee; therefore get thee up, and ſay, Lord, take me up with thee. When the Mariner hath Sea-room enough, he cares for no man, if he can but obſerve the channel; he looks not ſo much at his Oar, or any thing, ſo that he can but obſerve the channel. This channel is the full tide of promiſe; therefore lay thy ſelf upon the promiſe, and ſay, Lord, in the virtue of that grace, and in the power of that Spirit, carry me, and in the riches of that mercy of thine, Lord convey the heart of this poor ſinner, and make me happy with thy ſelf for ever.

Again,

Again, Never let a quick ſtock lie dead by you; it's monſtrous ill husbandry not to be trading with a quick ſtock. As it is in the world with temporalls, even ſo it is in our ſpiritual eſtate. Though a man have little for the preſent, yet if he have ſome old reverſion to come, it will refreſh his heart, and beare him up in time of poverty and miſery; and he ſaith, If he can make but a ſcrambling ſhift for a while, for ſo long time, then he hopes to live as well as any man in the Country: So there is ſome of the promiſes wee have in poſſeſſion. Oh, but there is the reverſion of old promiſes, old rents. As old rents of Farmes that were let long ago, when the Leaſes come out, they are worth treble the Rent they were let for at the firſt: ſo there are old rents of comfort and mercy; as, *Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you.* Then no more tears, no more trouble, no more ſorrow, no more ſin Oh get thoſe into your hands, and have them in uſe, and ſay, The day will come when

when we shall have happiness and joy beyond all that the tongue of man can express, or the heart conceive. Though we are buffeted with many temptations, and wearied with a world of corruptions, yet we shall be saved, saith Faith: Thus a man may make a pretty good shift to live upon these terms, though we have nothing else to live upon in the world. Remember what I speak now, and labour to fasten this truth upon thy heart; that there is not onely present good in thy self, but in another, and reserved by another for thy comfort, and be thou content it should be so; not only to look what thou hast; but consider that the greatest part of thy glory is in the glory of a Christ; and the greatest part of thy wisdom is in the wisdom of a Christ; and the greatest part of thy liberty in the liberty of a Christ, and thy riches in the riches of a Christ: And know, whatever is in Christ thou hast it all as thine, *John* 3. 12. *Behold what love the Father hath shewn to us, that we are*

now

now *the Sons of God !* I tell you, brethren, this is a marvellous priviledge; and if you had no more but this, you had a childes portion; but it appears not what we ſhall have; we have but a glimpſe now; what think you will the harveſt be? Now we have but the ſips of it, what ſhall then the full cups be, when *we ſhall ſee Chriſt as he is?* Thus did *Moſes* improve his eſtate, *Heb.* 11. 26. He bore all afflictions comfortably; yea, *He eſteemed the rebukes of Chriſt greater riches then the treaſures of Egypt*; Why? *becauſe he had an eye to the recompence of the reward.* We account not of a mans eſtate for what he hath in preſent poſſeſſion, but what is like to befal him, and that he is born unto. What *Moſes* did, do thou: Remember thou haſt a good ſtock upon the ground, which will pay all thy debt, and yet live like a man too. Though thou haſt many corruptions, many diſgraces caſt upon thee; though thou haſt little ſtrength, and art at great loſs in point of comfort, yet there is enough

enough in heaven, enough in Christ both of riches and comfort. Let thy soul then be careful to make all these present with thee for thine own good.

But some will say, How may a man expect that from the promise which God intends, and will undoubtedly bestow?

For answer hereunto, I will shew what thou mayest expect, and what God will undoubtedly bestow. If thou dost believe, Heaven and Salvation are certainly thine, and perseverance to the end, and that manner and measure of assistance that may make thee fit for perseverance: These three things grow here. But for temporal blessings which we desire, and that measure of spiritual blessings which we must have; so much grace, and so much assistance, and so much abilities to do duties; God doth not engage himself to bestow these. But that which God engageth himself to bestow, both for temporal and spiritual blessings, it may be discovered in these three

three particulars. So much grace and assurance of Gods love, and so much comfort in grace as hee sees fit for thee after his own order, and in his own time; I will open them all, because many doe here bungle wonderfully.

First, He will bestow them in his own order, not thy order. First, He will make thee fit, and make thee good, that thou mayest be able to digest them, and then hee will bestow them on thee. Haply a poor man is driven to desperate hazard, and is brought miserably under, and therefore the heart cryes earnestly for some more supply; and he calls, and God answers not; and he labours to look up to the promise, where God saith, *Nothing shall be wanting to his*, & yet it cometh not. I say, God will give these in his own order. First, God will make thee fit for this estate, and then give it. I never knew a good man desperately poor, but his heart was desperately proud; therefore the Lord will make him good, and make his proud heart yield, and then be-

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fever, it were the next way to send him going: but first he purges him, and makes him fit, and then gives him a Cordial: So it is in these things which thou craveſt; the Lord will give thee them, when thou ſhalt not ſurfeit of comfort, and aſſurance, and proſperity; and when thy heart is emptied and purged, and able to digeſt theſe things, then the Lord will give them.

Secondly, The Lord will give us temporal bleſſings, and that meaſure of ſpiritual, in his own due time; not when thou and I would, but when he ſees moſt fit, as *John* 2. 3, 4. The mother of Jeſus comes to our Saviour, and ſaith, *They have no wine.* She thought ſhe had Chriſt at command: but he anſwers her, *Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.* So it is with our ſouls; we want comfort, and we want ſtrength againſt our corruptions, and aſſurance, and aſſiſtance: But what have I to do with that proud heart, ſays our Saviour? *my time is not yet come.* You would have

have it now, as they said, *Wilt thou now restore the Kingdom to Israel?* God will do in his own time, and we must wait his leasure. This is one thing that doth necessarily accompany the Covenant of Grace, as I have shewed before. That the Lord should dispense of his Kingdom when he pleaseth, and not when we will. When the Lord sees these blessings of spiritual mercies and temporal favours are ripe, and most seasonable to thy necessity, then thou shalt have them: but the time is in Gods hand.

Thirdly, The Lord doth not promise in such a manner and measure, and such a peculiar thing, to give that temporal blessing, and that spiritual assistance we desire; but the Lord will do that which he knows most fit: for so the Text says, *Feed me with food convenient for me.* There was Faith now; he wholly refers himself to God. When a man comes to the Taylor to have a Garment made, he doth not cut out the Garment himself, but refers it to the judge-

ment

ent of the Workman. So must e do, refer our selves to God, and now, God promiseth nothing, but s he sees it fit for thy good. It may e thou shalt not have this blessing, r that grace. As it is with a Potter, e is minded to make so many vessels f honour: so if the Lord will make ee a vessel of honour, go away con-nted, whether thou hast so much rosperity, and so much good, or no, nd so much grace, it skills not; it is nough that thou art elected to eter-al happiness.

Now you see how to manage nd improve the promise aright for our best advantage, and to expect at from the promise which it will ield.

Again, Another particular in is third Rule of living by Faith, is is: How to take, and how to en-oy the sap and sweet of the promise, nd to live by it. When the Hus-ndman hath sown his ground, and s fruit is ripe, and he hath reaped , then he must gather in his corn at he may live upon it. So let us

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gather in the promises when we see the best advantage; now let us take the gain, and live by it, and that comfortably too, in the proof of Gods goodness therein. For this end, let me suggest these five Directions.

First, thou seest what God is in the promise; and thou expectest no more then God is there. Then, eye that particular good in the promise which thou standest in need of; eye that good in Christ, and in the promise, and then set Gods power and Faithfulness awork to bring that good, and his Wisdom to continue it. As for instance: I am in persecution, and either I would have deliverance and safety, that I might not be imprisoned, or else comfort and refreshment, if the Lord carry me thither; and therefore I would see all this in the promise, still reserving the conditions before mentioned. If thou art in prison, eye liberty and preservation in Christ, he that is the great Deliverer of his people, and carryeth his people in his own hands: And then set Gods power and

nd faithfulneſs awork, that can do
; and his wiſdom, that can conti-
ue it for thy good. That which
hou ſeeſt and needeſt in the promiſe,
hat the Power and Wiſdom of
God may communicate to thy ſoul.
his is the meaning of that place,
ſal. 37. 5. *Commit thy ways unto*
he Lord; truſt in him, and he ſhall
ring it to paſs. Root thy ſelf, and
y all thy occaſions upon the Lord:
herefore the Apoſtle ſaith, 1 *Pet.* 5.
. *Hurl your care upon the Lord, for*
e careth for you. It is Gods proper
fice and work: he careth for thy
ul, therefore lay it all upon him,
nd put over all thy care into his
nds, and ſet his power and faithful-
ſs awork; onely this is here a little
o be ſcanned. I ſpeak not this, that
e ſhould take no care at all; but I
y, Hang all the weight and burden
pon the Lord. The Brewer he
umbles the Barrel of Beer, and he
uls it, but it's the earth that bears it:
o whatever trouble is in thine eye,
r ear, or heart, roul it upon the
ord. That is thus: The weight
of

of a man lies especially in three things, which a man must hurl off himself, and lay upon the Lord. Either a man shall not be able to know what he shall do, or what he is commanded: Or else, secondly, he shall not be able to do what God commands, and he knows: Or else, thirdly, he shall not find success in what he doth. It is not a trouble to do what we can, or to employ ourselves as we are able: but this is the trouble, when the heart saith, I know not what the mind of God is; or, I shall not do what I know; or, it will not succeed: or, No, it is not in my power. Now leave all these with God, and meddle not with them, but put them over to the Lord, and meddle with thine own duty, and with thine own work; and let God alone with his: and say thou unto the Lord; In truth, Lord, it is not in my power, it is not in my parts or work either to compass that wisdom that is able to direct my self, or to have any power to do all that is commanded; much

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ſs to give good ſucceſs. Lord, I will not meddle with that, but leave it to thy Majeſtie: if thou in thy power canſt not, nor in thy faithfulneſs and goodneſs careſt not for thy poor helpleſs Creature, then I am content: and if thou wilt not be faithful, then I am content to be miſerable.

And ſo alſo thou mayeſt ſuppoſe a man that hath promiſed to undertake ſome buſineſs for a Friend, and in the end it proves ſomewhat troubleſome, and therefore he wiſhes his friend to take it again into his own hands; for it is very troubleſome: But man will leave it to him, and ſay, he hath engaged himſelf to do it, and he will not look after it; I will not meddle with it any more. So what ind it is that is in God's Royal Prerogative, leave it with God, and do not meddle with it, let God now look to it, leave it to his faithfulneſs and power to accompliſh it: ſo did *Abraham*, *Rom.* 14. 18, 19, 20. Abraham *above hope believed under hope, that he ſhould be the father of*

many Nations. *Sarah's* womb was barren, and his bodie dead, and yet he must have a Son: And therefore he sets God's power a work, and saith, *vers.* 21. Lord, this bodie is dead and *Sarah* is barren: there is no help here: but thou art able, and thou hast engaged thy self to do it. You see he sets God's power to work, and puts over all the right and burden of the care upon the Lord. And therefore says *Mordecai*, *Esther* 4. 14. *If thou hold thy peace at this time, comfort and deliverance shall come from some other place*. He was resolved that God had deliverance for his Church and would not deny his Truth. *Salvation will come*, saith the Text. He knows not the place or the means but he knows *Salvation will come*. Set thou God's power and faithfulness to work, and not thy own care. Commit it to the Lord, and hurl the care upon him, so far as concerns the burden of it. This is the first Direction.

Secondly, by faith go to the promise again for help and power

wait on God in that way, and to look towards God in the use of those means that he hath appointed for the attaining of that good which his power will work for thee: God will certainly work it: And so thou must meet God in the course of his providence, in the Improvement of the means he hath appointed for thy good. Observe thou his providence, and do thou what God requires: for otherwise we live not by faith, but tempt God, and throw away the promise and all, and deprive our selves of that good which God would bestow; we not walking in that way which he hath appointed. *Luke* 24. 49. when our Saviour was to go to Heaven, he said, *Behold, I send the promise of my Father amongst you: but tarry you in the City of Jerusalem, untill you be endued with power from above.* Christ would endue them with the Spirit, but they must tarry at *Jerusalem*, and wait for it. So I say, Wouldst thou have Grace and the Spirit from above, and the wealth of the world? then walk

in that way God hath appointed: ſtay at *Jeruſalem*, and be in the way, and meet God in his providence, and then thou ſhalt receive from his power and faithfulneſs what thou needeſt. Thou wouldſt have God bleſs thee in thine Eſtate, and yet thou wouldſt be idle and careleſs: but this will not do the deed: God would give thee a bleſſing, but thou art not there to take it. This is the excellencie of the promiſes of God; as they require conditions, before they beſtow mercies; ſo they make us able to be partakers of the conditions, and give the conditions: As for Example, *Ezek.* 36. the Lord in the former part of the Chapter promiſeth to give them many things; but how? It muſt be by Prayer, and humbling themſelves before him: he will give thee a Family-bleſſing, by Prayer in it; and a bleſſing in private, by Prayer in private; and ſtrength againſt ſin, and power againſt corruption: But I will be ſought unto for all theſe, ſaith the Lord: and the Text ſaith, *Bleſſed is*

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the man that walketh in his integrity, and his children after him. Therefore walk thou in the integritie of thine heart; that's the condition of a Chriſtian in general; or as a Husband, or as a Wife, or as a Servant, in the particular. This the promiſe requires. But mark this now: The ſame promiſe that requireth the conditions will help us to perform the conditions: and the ſame Lord that ſaith, *I will be intreated and ſought to for all theſe*; the ſame Lord ſaith, *Pſal.* 10. 17. *He prepareth their hearts to pray.* Go thou therefore to God to help thee to pray, that he may beſtow his bleſſing upon thee, which he hath promiſed, *Ezek.* 26.27. He will firſt give them *a new heart*, then *teach them to walk in his ways.* So, if thou wilt walk in his ways, thou ſhalt have his bleſſings; therefore go thou by the power of Faith to the promiſes of God for ſtrength and grace, and in that thou muſt uſe the means appointed, and then expect a bleſſing from it in the courſe of his providence. Now is God's power and

faithfulness a work.

The third Direction. We must set it down, and conclude it, that God will do it; so shall we receive, in the ways of his providence, whatsoever he hath promised to give. That is the work of Faith, and that is to draw sap and virtue from the promise, *John* 3.33. There, by sealing, is meant sealing to the promise. This is the nature of sealing; when a man hath drawn the Articles of Agreement, and when they have sealed, the whole matter is done. So Faith must make the promise authentical, and put a seal to it that it is true, and saith, It is done in Heaven, and I am fully resolved, and settledly perswaded thereof, that I shall have whatever I have believed, and thou hast promised, and I have used means in the ways of thy providence. Famous is that of *Abraham*, *Gen.*22.5. The Lord had bidden him sacrifice his Son, and yet had said before he should live: and therefore when he came to the place, he said to his Servants, *Abide you here with the Asses;*

Asses; for I and the childe will go yonder and sacrifice, and return again to you. He thought to sacrifice him, and yet by faith he believed that he should bring *Isaac* again. So I would have a poor Saint of God believe and conclude. When thou findest thy comforts, like *Isaac*'s, in the ashes, and thy estate helpless and hopeless, yet even then set God's power a-work, and wait upon him in the use of the means that he hath appointed, and there conclude it, and bring patience, power, and deliverance, and so in every kinde, according to all thy necessities. Yet remember this, Expect no more from the promise, than God will give in the promise: but say, My sins shall be mastered one day, and these temptations shall one day be overthrown, that have so long annoyed the Soul of thy Servant: I have begg'd succour against these corruptious within, and these temptations without, and yet it is not; but I know it's done in Heaven, it wants nothing but the taking out; thou wilt bestow upon

thy Servant what thou seest fit, 1 *Sam.*1.18. *Hannah* wept sore, and prayed to the Lord, and went away, and was no more sorrowful: and she said, Lord, I believe that I shall either have a childe, or that which is as good or better: now the business was done. But imagine the Lord delays, and does not suddenly accomplish what he intends, and thou hast used means to receive; he gives not, grants not, nor sends not succour according to thy desire, and the tenure of the Covenant, as thou conceivest.

Then, in the fourth place, Faith is to take up its stand, and stay till it come: as thou resolvest so it will be: stay till it be, and stay it out. Here is much work to do. We prevent God's kindness when we go away before he be willing to bestow a kindness on us. But Faith will not do so: he that believes does not make haste: he makes haste to obey, but he stays, and resolves that it will be. *The vision is for an appointed time*; therefore wait for it. Thou art

art peſtered with thy ſins, and haſt laboured by Faith to ſubdue them: and thy Eſtate is low, and thou haſt laboured by Faith for deliverance: and yet it comes not: therefore ſtay till God ſees fit, and it will come, *Pſal.* 123.2. *As the eyes of a ſervant look to the hands of his maſter, and the eyes of a maiden to her miſtris; ſo our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, untill he have mercy upon us.* It is not, Till I will, or till I ſee fit, or according to my minde: but untill the Lord have mercie. We ſuddenly ſlide away from the Covenant which the Lord makes with us: becauſe we have it not when we will, therefore we go away, 1 *Sam.* 13.13. When *Samuel* tarried long, and the people began to murmur, *Saul* went and offered a burnt-offering to the Lord; and therefore *Samuel* ſaid unto him, *Thou haſt done fooliſhly, and haſt not kept the Commandment of thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the Lord have eſtabliſhed the Kingdom upon* Iſrael *for ever.* If *Saul* had ſtayed the Lord's time, he would

have eſtabliſhed the Kingdom upon *Iſrael* for ever: but he prevented the Lord's kindneſ, and offered ſacrifice unſeaſonably and ſinfully. So it is many times with a proud, pettiſh, raſh and diſtempered heart: if we have not what we would, and when we would, then we are all amort, and murmur, and ſay, Why ſhould we wait any longer? Thou haſt done fooliſhly. Haſt thou prayed and looked to the promiſe thus long, and wilt thou now give over? The Lord would have comforted thee, hadſt thou gone on: but the Lord hath withdrawn himſelf from thee, becauſe thou haſt withdrawn thy heart from the promiſe. When the carriage is heavy, and the way dead, there are many ſore pulls, and oft the Waggon is at a ſtand; and if a man ſhould then go away and give over, all his work were loſt. Therefore ſtay thou till the Lord ſhew mercie. Thus long thou haſt call'd, and ſought, and look'd up to the promiſe, and waited upon the Lord, and attended upon the freeneſs of his grace; once more haply

haply would have done it: thy heart was almost humbled, thy sin was almost conquered: O thou silly Soul, why didst not thou hold it out? it would have come at the last; my life for thine. Now take heed of this; if the time seem tedious, and thy heart begins to sink, and thy spirit is weary; take heed of flying off, take heed of shifting for thy own comfort, and looking to base ends and aims: No, hold thy minde to, and keep thy eye of faith upon the promise, and stay it out till God see the time fit: and know, it's the best time when it's God's time. In the 27. of the *Acts*, *verse* 31. *Paul* says, *Except these abide in the Ship, ye cannot be safe.* Every man was skipping over-board to save himself: but *Paul* stayed them. A man would have thought otherwise; but the Apostle knew it was not so; for the Lord had revealed it to him. So I say, Be thy temptations never so strong, and thy sins never so many, and thou beginnest to complain, and sayest, I have cried, Lord, and sought earnestly,

earnestly, and yet my condition is worse, and my soul more sinful, and I am less able to help my self; there is no more succour to be expected. Now take heed of going out of the Ship, and from the use of means: keep in the Ship; for in it you shall be safe. Keep in the promise, and still your hearts there: you shall have a happy arrival at Heaven, though it be upon a little broken board: it's no matter, stay God's time.

The fifth Direction: Yet haply the Lord seems sometimes not onely to delay his poor Servants, and to withhold his favour; but he seems to frown, and say he will not hear; and he seems to be angry with the prayer of his Servants, and with their importunitie, and he seems as if he would not succour and supply: Thus he dealt with *Jacob*, *Genesis* 32.26 there the Lord says, *Let me go*; I care not what becomes of thee, *Let me go*. But *Jacob* lays hold upon him, and would not let him go. So the last work of Faith is this, In a holy humi litie labour to contend with God, and b

by ſtrong hand overcome the Lord; for the Lord loves to be overcome thus. Be not ſaucy with the Lord; and in the ſenſe of thine own baſeneſs, as it were, catch the Lord Jeſus, and ſtrive with him; leave not till thou haſt thoſe comforts he hath promiſed, and thou haſt begged. This is the glorie and victorie of the triumph of faith, that gives thee the day too, and lays down the weapons, and yields himſelf conquered: As it was with *Jacob*; when God ſaw he could not prevail, he ſaid, *Verſe* 28. *Thy name ſhall no more be called* Jacob, *but* Iſrael; *becauſe thou haſt prevailed with God.* God is ready to give what he hath promiſed: but he will have us try the maſtery with him. God overcomes himſelf, and we by Faith in God overcome Cod: as *James* 2. 13. *Mercy triumphs over Juſtice.* Lord, ſaith my Soul, Why ſhould not I have that mercie, ſupplie and ſuccour? Saith Juſtice, Thou art a ſinful wretch, and thou haſt wronged me: Saith Anger, Thou haſt deſerved to be plagued: and there-

therefore thou shalt feel the smart of my displeasure. Now Faith lays hold upon the riches of the freeness of God's mercie in Christ, and in him Justice is satisfied, and Anger appeased for all; and now Mercie is purchased for all, and Mercie triumpheth over Justice, and Faith takes hold upon and overcomes God himself, as I may say, with a holy humble baseness of heart. You know what the Lord did to the Woman of *Canaan*: when she had striven with him a great while, and would take no denial, at last he saith, *O Woman, great is thy Faith, be it unto thee as thou wilt.* Take what thou wilt, if thou wilt have life for thy childe, and peace for thine own conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost, take it; for it is all thine. He, as it were, turns her loose to all his Treasurie: If she had gone away at the first or second denial, she had found no help: but because she held out, she had all her hearts desire. God would have us wrestle with his Majestie, that he may be overcome in mercie and

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goodneſs. I might have here taken ſome of the moſt deſperate caſes that could be, that you might have ſeen what Faith would have done in the midſt of the want of all means, and in the greateſt extremitie that could have befallen a poor ſinner; but I paſs over that at this time. Now therefore conſider what hath been ſaid; Lay theſe things up, and have them ever before you, and practiſe them: and by often writing, learn to write: and by often living, learn to live. Many people live poorly, and make a poor ſhift to go to Heaven: but I would not have a Chriſtian live ſo, but be Maſter of his Art. Know and ſee your way, and uſe the means. Labour to get good thereby, that you may have ſap, and the ſweet of the promiſes, and ſo go ſinging, and rejoycing, and triumphing, up to Heaven. Now that which I conclude withall, is this: You ſee how far the Lord hath brought us, how the ſoul hath been prepared, and cut off from ſin and himſelf, if fitted for the Lord Jeſus by contrition and humiliation,

no, and that the Soul comes to see that there is no hope in the creatures, nor any succour in Heaven, but in the Lord Jesus Christ; and so at last the sinner comes and lies at the foot of the Lord Jesus Christ, and knows that either he must be another man, or a damned man: now when he sees that prayer and all other means will not profit, and the power of the means yet prevails not, and the power of his corruptions is not yet mastered: then he looks up to Christ, and is contented that he should do what he will with him. Now when the Lord Jesus Christ sees him lie wearied thus with his corruptions, then the Lord gives special notice to his Soul, that it is his purpose to do him good, and that there is mercie for that broken heart of his. With that, Hope is stirred, and faith, Is it possible? Is it credible? Shall this wretchedness of mine be pardoned? O, my desire is kindled within me, and I long for that day. O that I might once see the Funeral of all my sins! Mark now, how Love and Joy are cheared

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to entertain this Mercie; and saith, O how is the Soul bound and engaged to God, that offers free and undeserved grace to a stubborn and rebellious sinner! At last the Will saith *Amen* to the Promise, and further saith, O, that mercie I will have! And thus the Soul is come home to God, by vocation. Now the Prodigal is come home to his Father, and the Father's heart leaps within his breast, when he sees him lie at the door. And as the Father rejoyceth, so the Angels in Heaven rejoyce, and all the Faithful shall rejoyce, and say, O my Husband! O my Father! O my Childe, and my Wife that was a sinful Woman, is come home again, to her first and best Husband. You that have found it thus in your selves, be ye comforted: you that know it in others, rejoyce.

To summe up all briefly, we see,

First, when we have pluckt away all carnal props, that then there is way made for the promise to come in to us.

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Secondly, and when our hearts are poſſeſſed throughly of the ſufficiencie of God's promiſe and grace, that then the promiſe that draws near, begins its work.

Thirdly, that when we expect all from the promiſe, even power to come to it, that then it lays faſt-hold upon us.

Fourthly, that when we are content to yield to the juſt conditions of the promiſe, then the promiſe carries us, and all in us.

Thus we have ſeen the hinderances removed, and the means propounded: and now, that we may be moved and perſwaded importunately to ſeek after this bleſſed grace of God: let us further conſider thus much: namely, that if we once get this grace, we get all other graces with it; which is a ground of much comfort, and cannot but keep us doing: For, will it not much encourage a man, when in the doing of one work, he knows he ſhall do another: nay, all his work with one labour? but ſo it is in the work of faith. O then how

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hould it encourage us to labour for *aith*, ſeeing that by getting it, we ave all? Men that are wiſe to provide or themſelves, and to lay out their oneys in ſome purchaſe for the eſt: when they ſee a ground well ooded and watered, but eſpecially o have ſome rich Mines in it; all heir mindes will be upon ſuch a lace; becauſe, having it, they have ll with it: So it ſhould be here, in ur deſires: and as there, ſo here: et grace, and get all: ſtrengthen ere, and all is ſtrong: but want here, nd want every where: having this race of faith, you need not ſeek for iſdom; for faith will make you wiſe o ſalvation: and you need not la- our for patience; for he that is faith- ul, will be patient; and ſo for other races. He that hath the grace of aith, hath them all, hath holineſs, ath cleanneſs, hath love, hath a ure minde, and good conſcience: nd what hath he not? The Saints f God endeavour with much pains o get grace, and to ſubdue corrupti- n: but becauſe they take not the right

Faith to be labour-ed for a-bove all graces.

right way to it, they seek and not finde.

Many a poor Soul mourns and cries to Heaven for mercie, and prays against a stubborn hard heart, and is weary of his life, because his vile heart remains yet in him; and yet haply gets little or no redress: the reason is, and the main wound lies here; he goes the wrong way to work; for, he that would have grace must (first of all) get Faith, Faith will bring all the rest; buy the Field, and the Pearl is thine; it goes with the Purchase, thou must not think with thine own strugling to get the masterie of a proud heart; for that will not do: but let thy Faith go first to Christ, and try what that can do. There are many graces necessary in this work; as, meekness, patience, humilitie and wisdom: now Faith will fetch all these, and possess the Soul of them. Brethren, therefore if you set any price upon these graces, buy the field, labour for Faith; get that, and you get all. The Apostle saith, *We all with open face beholding, as in a glass,*

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he glory of the Lord, are changed into he ſame image from glory to glory. The Lord Chriſt is the Glaſs, and the lorious grace of God in Chriſt is at glorie of the Lord: therefore ſt behold this grace in Chriſt by aith (and thou muſt ſo, before thou nſt receive grace.) Firſt, ſee hu-ilitie in Chriſt, and then fetch it ence: Firſt, ſee ſtrength and cou-ge in him, whereby to enable thy eak heart, and ſtrength will come; ere fetch it, and there have it. Would you then have a meek, graci-s, and humble heart? I dare ſay, for me of you, that you had rather ve it than any thing under Heaven, d would think it the beſt bargain at ever you made; which is the uſe why you ſay, O that I could ce ſee that day, that this proud art of mine might be humbled! O I could ſee the laſt bloud of my ſins, ſhould then think my ſelf happy, ne more, and deſire to live no nger! But is this thy deſire, poor ul? then get Faith, and ſo buy the hole, for they go all together: nor think

think to have them upon any price not having faith: I mean patience and meekneſs, and the humble heart but buy faith the field, and you hav the Pearl. Further, would you hav the glorie of God under eye, and b more heavenly-minded? then loo to it, and get it by the eye of Faith look up to it in the face of Jes Chriſt, and then you ſhall ſee it; an then hold you there: for there, an there onely, this viſion of the glor of God is to be ſeen, to yo everlaſting peace and endleſs com fort. When men uſe to make a Pu chaſe, they ſpeak of all the Comm dities of it; as, That there is ſo mu Wood, worth ſo much; and ſo mu ſtock, worth ſo much; and then th offer for the whole, anſwerable theſe ſeverals. So here, there is *It* for an heavenly minde, and tha worth thouſands; and *Item* for humble heart, and that's worth m lions; and ſo for the reſt. And thoſe graces ſo much worth? Wh is Faith worth then? Hence, may conclude, and ſay, O preci

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faith! precious indeed, that is able to bring so many, nay, all graces with it: as one degree of grace after another: and grace here, and happiness for ever hereafter. If we have but the hearts of men (I do not say of Christians) me thinks this that is spoken of Faith, should provoke us to labour always, above all things, for this blessed grace of God, the grace of Faith.

FINIS.